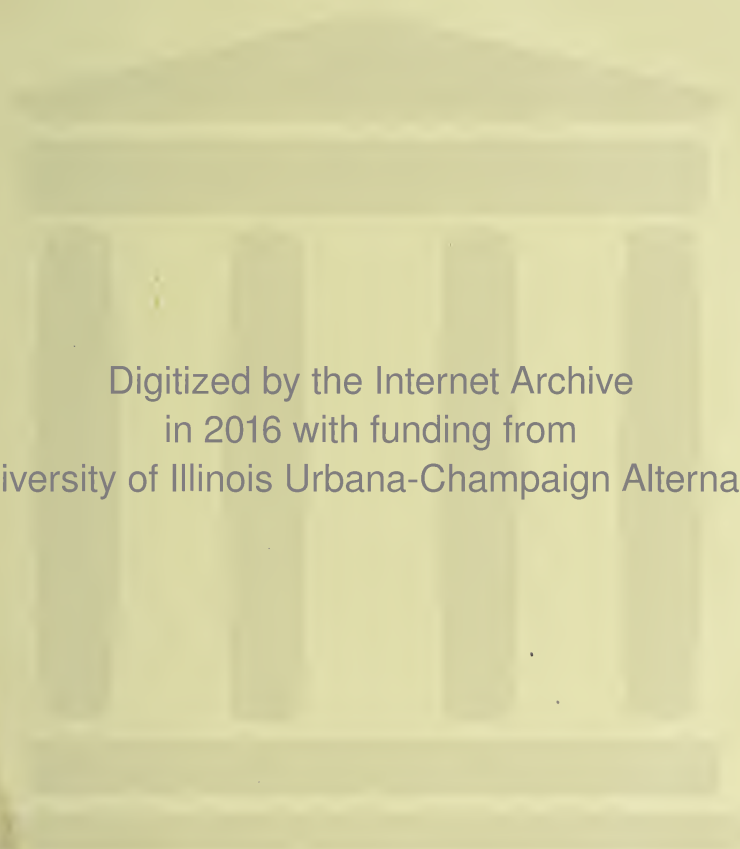


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# SELECT WORKS

OF

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EDITED BY HIS SON-IN-LAW,

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VOL. VI.

EDINBURGH: EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS,  
HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO., LONDON.

1863.





EVIDENCES  
OF THE  
CHRISTIAN REVELATION  
AND  
LECTURES ON PALEY'S EVIDENCES.

BY  
THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. LL.D.

EDINBURGH : EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS,  
HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO., LONDON.

1863.





19 Feb-29 1848

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EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.



## P R E F A C E.

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IT was after some hesitation, that we resolved to place our argument with Hume at the outset of the following work, rather than at the end of it. Men can both understand and be rightly impressed by the objects of belief, long before the metaphysics of belief are either understood or attended to; and it might therefore have seemed better to enter immediately on the evidence from human testimony for the miracles of the gospel, previous to our entertainment of the question whether it was competent for such testimony to establish the truth of a miracle.

But we decided for the arrangement as it now stands, on the consideration that this alleged insusceptibility of a proof is, everywhere throughout the celebrated essay of Mr. Hume, regarded and reasoned upon as if it were a bar in the way of all further or detailed examination of it—just as the preliminary objection to a witness upon a trial, if not previously judged of and pronounced upon, is held fatal to the reception of his evidence. We have therefore introduced our discussion of this controversy into the first Book—though in violation of what in some respects we deem to be the natural order; and subjecting our readers to the disadvantage of a more obscure and difficult passage at the commencement, than they will meet with anywhere else along the course of the volume.

We hope that the reader will, even in this preliminary argument, find the observation to be verified which is so often realized in other departments of the evidence of Christianity. It has frequently happened, in the course of the deistical contro-

versy, that the enemies of the gospel have, in the first instance, by the peculiar character of their objections, challenged its friends to a walk of investigation which had not been previously entered on—in the prosecution of which walk they achieved a great deal more than simply neutralize the objection which first provoked them to the conflict; but, as if by its overthrow they had opened a new mine of evidence, have raised a positive and additional proof for the truth of Christianity. This we expect to show, particularly in our third Book, on the internal evidences of Christianity. The alleged inconsistencies of the New Testament with itself have not only been cleared up by the lucubrations of critics and defenders; but a constantly increasing number of recondite harmonies has been discovered, which, in the masterly hands of Dr. Paley, has been converted into an irresistible argument on the side of the faith. The same has been the result of the contradictions that were affirmed by our adversaries, to obtain between the informations of the New Testament and of profane or Jewish authors—the objection not only put to flight, but transmuted into a strong affirmative argument; and now left in full possession of the field through the labours of Lardner and Blunt and others, who have pointed out a number of minute and marvellous coincidences between the narratives of our sacred writers and those of contemporary authors. The same is the result, we are persuaded, of the objection made by adversaries, on the ground of the discrepancies that are said to obtain between the gospel and human nature—whereas, in the felt adaptations of the one to the other, there is a vast amount, as we shall endeavour to make manifest in the latter part of the volume, of most effective evidence in favour of the Christian religion.

We are not without hope that the intelligent reader will be able to reap the same fruit from the sceptical reasonings of Mr. Hume. If the argumentation which we have employed against him be at all valid, the just conclusion is not merely that there is an evidence on the side of Christianity, as much superior to the greater improbability of its extraordinary facts, as the best



evidence which has descended to us from ancient times is superior to the small improbability of the facts in ordinary history—but that, in truth, after full deduction has been made for the incredibility of miracles, there remains an overpassing superiority of evidence in their favour above all that can possibly be claimed for the best attested histories which have been transmitted to the present day, in any other records of past ages. Christianity on this ground too, as on many others, has, we think, not only won for herself the safety of a defence; but has been enriched by the spoils of a victory.

If in the first Book of this work, we have chiefly to do with the miraculous argument in the abstract; we pass in the second to that argument in the concrete, or consider the actual evidence for the miracles of the gospel. Even in this department it will be found to be more a work of principles than of details; and there are few of its lessons which we should, in opposition to a prevalent bias, so like adequately to impress on the understanding of the reader—as the inherently greater strength of evidence given by the scriptural than by the ex-scriptural, or by the original than the subsequent witnesses for the truth of the evangelical history; and also the far superior value of the Christian to the heathen testimonies.

Although we have assigned to the third Book, our considerations and views on the internal evidence of Christianity—we are abundantly sensible of the difficulty which there is, in tracing the precise line of demarcation between this and the external evidence. If the one consist in those marks of credibility which we observe when looking to the witnesses of the message, the other may be regarded as consisting in those marks of credibility which we observe when looking to its contents or its subject matter. It is with this last that the third Book is chiefly conversant, with the self-evidencing power of the Bible—the chief ingredient of which, as being far the most effectual in the work of Christianization or conversion, has been denominated the manifestation of the truth unto the conscience, or otherwise, the experimental evidence for the truth of Christianity. We shall

endeavour to make palpable the distinction between this most solid of all the evidences, and a certain other internal evidence which we have long regarded as of a spurious or at least a very questionable character.

The fourth and last Book is taken up, in great part at least, with what may be termed the *bibliography* of Scripture—the evidence on which its various pieces have been admitted into the *canon*, so as to form constituent parts of our present Bible ; and the security we have for the general correctness of the present readings in the received original Scriptures, as well as of the renderings in the various popular versions of Christendom ; or, in other words, our security both for the state of the text and for the truth of its generally received interpretations. This argument has given rise to distinct chapters on the respective functions of Scripture Criticism and Systematic Theology. But, over and above, we have thought it right to discuss both the evidence and the degree of that *inspiration*, by which we hold the Sacred Volume to be distinguished from all other writings—a topic of incalculable importance, and which prepares the way for our concluding chapter on the supreme authority of revelation. It will be perceived, in this department of the work, how closely the two questions—of the canon of Scripture, and its inspiration, are related to each other.

# EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

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## BOOK I.—PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.

### CHAPTER I.

ON THE COGNIZANCE WHICH THE UNDERSTANDING TAKES OF ITS  
OWN PROCESSES.

1. IT has often been said of man that he is the greatest of all mysteries to himself. What hath led to this saying is his profound ignorance of that which is so immediately about him as his own sentient and moral and intellectual economy. It is strange that to him the most deep and difficult secrets are those which lie nearest to him. Yet so it is—and however inscrutable he may find nature to be in all her departments, yet never does he find her more so than among the recesses of his own internal system, and amid the hidden workings of his own nature.

2. But it is of the utmost practical importance to remark that though man knows not the processes of that complex economy by which it is that he moves and feels and thinks, it is not necessary that he should, in order either to move aright, or to feel aright, or even to think aright. In as far as the merely animal constitution is concerned, this is quite palpable. That the processes of this constitution should go rightly forward it is not necessary that he should understand them. He does not need to study anatomy that he might find his way to the appropriate muscles by which to move and turn himself. It is not by any intelligent guidance of his that the processes of digestion and secretion and circulation are regulated. The creature may be upheld in living play and in the healthful enjoyment of life, although he



should never have taken lessons on physiology, or speculated till he had lost his way among the arcana of vitality and the vital principle. That the machinery of his own internal system may be kept prosperously agoing, it is no more required that he should look inwardly, than that he should look outwardly or upwardly to the heavens lest the mechanism of the planetary system should go into unHINGEMENT. The systems both of astronomy and anatomy are independent of him—and though both lay hid in unrevealed mystery for ages, yet did the one proceed as invariably and the other almost so, as *now* that they have been somewhat opened to the gaze of his curiosity. A thing may operate rightly though he knows nothing of the *modus operandi*. To have the full use of his animal system he is nearly as independent of the science of it as any inferior creature who is incapable of science—and who nevertheless in the freshness and buoyancy of its own spontaneous powers can expatiate at large in the element that is suited to it; and either revel in fields of air, or sport itself in the waters of the sea, or luxuriate on the pastures of earth—and all by the adaptations of a self-mechanism, of the workings of which, nay even of the existence of which, it is wholly unconscious.

3. All this is abundantly obvious—but it has not been sufficiently attended to, that the remark is nearly as applicable to man's moral as to his animal constitution. That this constitution be in a wholesome state, or that its various faculties and functions should be in right adjustment, it is not necessary for man the owner of this constitution to take a reflex view of it, or become theoretically acquainted with the nature and the workings of this inner mechanism. What has been said of physical may be as emphatically said of moral and spiritual health. The vigorous clown may have all the use or enjoyment of it—while all the science of it belongs to the sickly valetudinarian. And in like manner the first may never have heard of a moral sense, and yet both promptly discern and powerfully feel the obligations of morality—while the second can subtly analyze that conscience, whose authority he bids away from him. The truth is, that often when man is most alive to the sense of what is duteous and incumbent, it is not to himself that he looks—but to a fellow-man, whether an applicant for justice or charity, who at the time is present to his sight, or to God the sovereign claimant of piety and of all righteousness, who at the time is present to his thoughts. So that all the while he may have been looking out-

wardly to an object, and never once have cast an introverted view upon himself the subject. He may have been looking objectively or forth of himself, and never subjectively or towards himself. He may have taken in a right sensibility from the object that is without him, and have been practically urged thereby in a right direction. There has been a real inward process in consequence—but the process has only been described or undergone; it has not been attended to. The organ whether of feeling or of perception may be justly impressed with the object that is addressed to it, while the man is wholly taken up with the object; and meanwhile all consciousness of the organ is suspended. It is precisely like the man who can see rightly that which is before him, although he should never think of the eye's retina, nor be aware of its existence. Notwithstanding his well-conditioned moral state he may be as ignorant of the moral, as many a peasant in a well-conditioned physical state is ignorant of the physical anatomy. In the construction of our ethical systems, this distinction has not been enough adverted to—between a knowledge of the objects of the science, and a knowledge of the faculty by which these objects are perceived or judged of. Certain it is, that without the latter knowledge there may, practically, be a most correct intelligence and feeling in regard to the question of right and wrong—nay, the principles of this question may be philosophically arranged, and a complete moral philosophy be framed without that peculiar analysis which is resorted to by those who blend the moral with the mental philosophy.

4. But the same is also true of our intellectual constitution. It may be in a sound state and may operate soundly, though we should never have bestowed one thought upon it. That the understanding may proceed aright on the many thousand objects of human thought, it is not necessary that it should take any cognizance of its own processes. We admit that the procedure of the human understanding forms one, and that too a most interesting topic of inquiry. But it is not necessary to have mastered this topic, ere we are qualified to enter on other topics of inquiry. The truth is, that a man may have put forth his understanding with wisdom and with a warrantable confidence on every other department of human knowledge—and yet be a stranger to that one department, the knowledge of his own intellectual processes. In a word, the understanding may understand everything but itself—we mean everything that is within the circle of our mental acquisitions. We may work well with



an instrument, though we do not attend to the workings of the instrument. We do not first look to the instrument of thought, and then to the objects of thought—or first to that which understands, and then to that which is to be understood. We investigate without one thought of the investigating mind—just as to ascertain the visible properties of that which is before it, the eye, instead of looking to itself, looks openly and directly forth of itself, and on the outer field of contemplation.

5. There are many who exercise their intellectual powers vigorously and soundly, without ever once casting an introverted eye on their mode of operation—who, in contact only with the objects of reasoning, never once bestow a formal or express thought on the act of reasoning, yet reason conclusively and well—who, busied with nothing else, for example, but lines and angles and surfaces, can prosecute a most logical and unexceptionable train of argumentation, yet have never made of logic a science or a study—who can travel the whole round of our existing mathematics, without one thought of that mind which performs every footstep, or the working of that machinery within to which they are indebted for every inch of their progress. It is all the while with something apart from the understanding that the thinking principle is engaged, and not with the understanding itself; and while there are many who, to magnify their own office, will tell of the science of mind that it is the parent of all other sciences, and which therefore occupy a place that is posterior and subordinate, we feel it to be certain that Newton might have done all that he has achieved in geometry, that he might have made the same skilful application of it to the physics and philosophy of the material universe, that he might have unravelled the mazy heavens, and moved with gigantic footstep from one wondrous discovery to another, without one reflex thought on the operations of that faculty within his breast, which yet was the instrument of all his triumphs. He did not first meditate his understanding by the prescriptions of logic, and then go forth with it on the theatre of its exercise. But he went forth with it in all the vigour of its immediate and original health, and fastened it at once on the objects of physical investigation. Even the three Laws of Nature, by which he introduces the Principia to his reader, he gathered, not from the field of his internal, but from that of his external contemplations. They are not laws of mind, but laws which have their jurisdiction in surrounding space; and it is by looking intelligently there, and

not by looking to itself, that the mind is enabled to recognise them.

6. On this subject we hold Dr. Brown to have overrated the importance of the mental philosophy—both when he says that a right view of the science of mind is essential to every other science, and when he says, that “to the philosophy of mind every speculation in every science may be said to have relation as a common centre.” A certain given effect may be found to depend on a particular thing, and yet may not at all depend on our *knowledge* of the thing. He seems to have confounded these two, and to have ascribed that to our knowledge of a thing which was only due to the thing itself. It is true, that the actual results in every science depend not merely on the nature of the objects investigated, but on the nature of the investigating mind—and that with minds differently constituted, or having other powers and perceptions than those which do in fact belong to us, all our sciences would be affected with a corresponding difference. A differently-constituted mental system in our species, would have made all our sciences different from those which make up our existing philosophy; but that is not to say, that we must first study the actual construction of our minds ere we can enter on the study of the actual sciences. Science, as it is, may be regarded as the compound effect of two ingredients—of mind as it is, and of that which the mind investigates, even the subject-matter of the science. Change one of these ingredients, even the mind, and this will give rise to the new compound of a science different and differently modified. But it does not follow, that because all science thus depends on the nature of that ingredient, it therefore depends on our knowledge of that ingredient. It is most true that as the mind is, so effectively the science is. But we bring about the effect simply by using the mind, although we should not have studied it. The philosopher goes forth upon nature with such a mind as he finds himself to have, and the result is a science in the state we now actually behold it. Had he found himself with a different mind, he would still have gone forth upon nature; and the result would have been a science different from the present one. But in neither case does he look reflexly upon the mind, nor is it necessary that he should. It is no doubt the instrument of all his discoveries; but mental though it be, it is no more essential to his sound and effective working of it that he should become acquainted with the laws of mind, than it is

essential for an artisan, in order that he might work his instrument rightly, to become acquainted with the laws of matter. Had our minds been constituted otherwise than they are, we should have had a different mental physiology—and corresponding to this, a different set of the sciences. The working of our mental physiology is indispensable to our acquisition of all the sciences; but the knowledge of our mental physiology is not indispensable to the acquisition of any of the sciences, save of the science of mind alone.

7. The mind, in the work of investigating any object beside itself, employs the laws of thought—just as the mechanic in working with his tools employs the laws of matter. But it is not necessary in either case that the laws, whether of matter or of mind, should have been previously investigated by the operator himself. The resulting view or the resulting feeling of the mind's attention to any object, apart from itself, is the composed effect of what the mind is and of what the object is—so that if the constitution of the mind were altered, the view or the feeling would also be altered. What the mind is, is therefore indispensable to the result, but not our knowledge of what the mind is; and therefore though in direct contradiction to Dr. Brown we hold “that every branch of the physics of mere matter could be cultivated to its highest degree of accuracy and perfection, without our ever having reflected on the nature of that intellectual medium through which alone the phenomena of matter become visible to us.”\*

\* The following extracts from Brown's second lecture contain the most of what we hold to be exceptionable in his views upon this subject:—

“It was to show what is of much more importance,—how essential a right view of the science of mind is to every other science, even to those sciences which superficial thinkers might conceive to have no connexion with it; and how vain it would be to expect that any branch of the physics of mere matter could be cultivated to its highest degree of accuracy and perfection, without a due acquaintance with the nature of that intellectual medium through which alone the phenomena of matter become visible to us, and of those intellectual instruments by which the objects of every science, and of every science alike, are measured, and divided, and arranged. We might almost as well expect to form an accurate judgment, as to the figure, and distance, and colour of an object, at which we look through an optical glass, without paying any regard to the colour and refracting power of the lens itself. The distinction of the sciences and arts, in the sense in which these words are commonly understood, is as just as it is familiar; but it may be truly said, that, in relation to our power of discovery, science is itself an art, or the result of an art. Whether, in this most beautiful of processes, we regard the mind as the instrument or the artist, it is equally that by which all the wonders of speculative or practical knowledge are evolved. It is an agent operating in the production of new results, and employing for this purpose the known laws



8. The analogy which he institutes between the mind and a telescope, viewed as instruments of observation, will not make good his argument. He tells us that to expect an acquaintance with external things without acquaintance with the natural medium of the intellect—were as vain as to expect that we should form an accurate judgment as to the figure and distance and colour of an object at which we look through the artificial medium of an optical glass, without paying any regard to the colour and refractory power of the medium itself—and that, “to the astronomer, the faculty by which he calculates the disturbing forces that operate on a satellite of Jupiter, in its revolutions round the primary planet, is as much an instrument of his art as the telescope by which he distinguishes that almost invisible orb; and it is as important and surely as interesting to know the real power of the intellectual instrument which he uses, not for calculations of this kind only, but for all the speculative and moral purposes of life, as it can be to know the exact power of that subordinate instrument which he uses only for his occasional survey of the heavens.” Now our design in the examination of an optical glass previous to the use of it, is to compare its intimations with those of the eye, that we might reduce both to the same standard. But a like scientific examination of the eye is not at all called for—we having already arrived at the confident use of it by the education of the senses, or that busy interchange and comparison of notices between the sight and the touch, during which, from early infancy, the mind has all

of thought, in the same manner as, on other occasions, it employs the known laws of matter. The objects to which it may apply itself, are indeed various, and, as such, give to the sciences their different names. But, though the objects vary, the observer and the instrument are continually the same. The limits of the powers of this mental instrument, are not the limits of its powers alone; they are also the only real limits within which every science is comprehended. To the extent which it allows, all those sciences, physical or mathematical, and all the arts which depend on them, may be improved; but beyond this point, it would be vain to expect them to pass; or rather, to speak more accurately, the very supposition of any progress beyond this point would imply the grossest absurdity; since human science can be nothing more than the result of the direction of human faculties to particular objects. To the astronomer, the faculty by which he calculates the disturbing forces that operate on a satellite of Jupiter, in its revolution round the primary planet, is as much an instrument of his art, as the telescope by which he distinguishes that almost invisible orb; and it is as important, and surely as interesting, to know the real power of the intellectual instrument which he uses, not for calculations of this kind only, but for all the speculative and moral purposes of life, as it can be to know the exact power of that subordinate instrument which he uses only for his occasional survey of the heavens.

“To the philosophy of mind, then, every speculation in every science may be said to have relation as to a common centre.”

along felt that it was holding converse not with itself but with the external world. The confidence wherewith we use the natural instruments, whether of the eye or of the mind, is the fruit of a gross and general experience; and no reflex or introverted view which the mind can now take of its own operations will add to that confidence. And after that, either by our own science or the report of scientific men, we have obtained confidence in the use of an optical glass, we look no longer *to* it—but *through* it, and *to* the object, on which object it is that our attention terminates and rests. And after that by the tuition of nature, under which the homeliest peasant has risen to as great a proficiency as ourselves, we have acquired the confident use of our senses, we look neither *to* them nor *to* the mind, but *from* the mind and *on* the object of contemplation.

9. Although to the physiology of the mind belong all those powers and processes, by which it is that it acquires the knowledge of things which are separate from itself, and therefore the working of this physiology is anterior to the acquirement of all knowledge—yet the knowledge of this physiology is not so anterior. The physiology may be at work, soundly and successfully at work, without being at all understood or even adverted to—just as a man may operate rightly and fulfil the whole practical object of some piece of machinery that has been put into his hands, although he understands not the construction of it. The mental physiology in regard to its being must have the historical precedency over all science—but the science of this physiology has no such historical precedency over all other science. Suppose that, instead of access by consciousness to the mechanism of my own intellect, I had access by some new channel of observation to the mechanism of the intellect of another man, and that I saw him busily and prosperously engaged in the study or contemplation of some one department of external nature—it is by looking to him certainly, that I should extend my knowledge of the world of spirit—but it would be by looking to the very same place on which his regards are fastened, that I should extend my knowledge of the world of sense. For this latter purpose, I would just as little look towards him, as he is doing himself, at the moment when his attention is intently fastened on some outer field of contemplation. To obtain the accurate perception of a tree, I should not look to the faint and perhaps muddy reflection of it, from the waters of that lake on whose margin it is standing—and neither should I look to the



mind of another, nor yet to my own mind, that from the mental reflection which is exhibited there, I might learn of that material world which stands in its own direct revelation before me.

10. It has been affirmed in plea for the priority of the study of mind over all other studies, that it is only by means of just conceptions in regard to the powers and the province of the human intellect, that certain illusions have been dissipated which were not merely unphilosophical in themselves, but which, so long as they lasted and had currency in the world, did effectually baffle the progress of all philosophy. But we, I contend, who now are in a state of freedom from these illusions, have no call upon us for attending to the process by which they were destroyed. The ingenious sophistries of Hume led to the conclusion that the material world had no existence but in our own shadowy imaginations. But is that a reason why, ere I enter on the natural philosophy by which the laws of matter are investigated, I who have no doubt upon the subject, must first be satisfied of the superior force of that reasoning by which the sophistries of Hume have been overthrown? I am not at all troubled with those sensible species which schoolmen chose to interpose between the human mind and those external realities by which it is encompassed—and am I therefore to be troubled ere I can clear my way to an immediate converse with these realities, with those masterly demonstrations of a sounder and better intellectual philosophy, by which all the species and spectres of the Middle Ages have at length been put to flight? Because there are men in all ages, who have wandered from the direct path of simplicity and common sense in pursuit of some laborious follies of their own, can I who do not share in these follies only find access to that path across the still more laborious philosophy which has now extinguished them for ever? The elaborate perversities of the human mind may require the elaboration equally severe of some great master-spirit to overturn them. But now that these perversities have gone into oblivion, and the temporary purpose of their utter destruction has been accomplished—is it for us to leave the obvious and rectilinear path which nature has marked out, in pursuit of every wild deviation, or even of the retracing path by which the wanderers have been called back again. We utterly refuse the right of human folly in past generations to lay such a tax upon posterity—and though aware that a whole millennium of thickest intellectual darkness passed over the world, and that it was only dispersed by the phi-

losophy of Bacon—yet now that he has set us on the right path of investigation, in that path we may go, alike unconscious of those false lights by which our ancestors were bewildered, or of that greater light which put out them all. The confidence of nature was disturbed by the reveries of the schoolmen. But now that these reveries are dissipated, the confidence is restored. And without once having looked on the *Novum Organum* of Bacon, there is not a human creature in the maturity of his ordinary understanding, who does not know his great and simple lesson, and only great because of the monstrous absurdities by which for ages it was wholly overborne—even that to ascertain the visible qualities of an object we must look, or its sonorous qualities we must listen, or its tangible qualities we must handle, or its dimensions we must measure.\*

11. There is no doubt that the view which we are led to take on every one subject of human knowledge is dependent on the physiology of the mind. But that is not to say that we must therefore become first acquainted with this physiology, ere we set ourselves to the acquirement of all other knowledge. There can be no doubt that because such is the constitution of the mind, such therefore are its modes of reasoning and of judging on all the objects of possible contemplation. But it does not on that account follow, that we must first study this constitution ere we proceed to the study of anything else. The powers of the mind are antecedent to the acquirements of the mind. But the knowledge of those powers by which the acquirements are gotten is not antecedent to that knowledge in which the acquirements consist. The mind is the instrument of all its own acquisitions—but the instrument has been long tried and used, and has also accomplished a great deal of work, before its properties have become the objects of our separate investigation. It is true, that without a retina and without a picture of that which is external being spread out there, there could have been no science of optics. But it is just as true that it would have been as clear and demonstrative a science as it is at this moment, though anatomists had never found their way to this phenomenon, and the

\* Dugald Stewart says, in vol. ii. pp. 36, 37 of his "*Philosophy of the Moral and Intellectual Powers*"—"The science of abstruse learning, I consider in the same light with the ingenious writer who compares it to Achilles' spear that healed the wounds that it made before. It serves to repair the damage it-elf had occasioned, and this perhaps is all it is good for. It casts no additional light upon the paths of life; but disperses the clouds with which it had overspread them before. It advances not the traveller one step on his journey; but conducts him back again to the spot from which he wandered."

very first touch of their dissecting instrument had so injured the whole of the visual apparatus as to have made the exhibition impossible. And in like manner, there is a certainty and an evidence in many of the sciences that is altogether unaffected either by the success or the failure of our speculations on the mental physiology. When I look to the lines and the angles of geometry, it is not to the diagram upon my retina, but to the diagram upon the paper or upon the board—and in like manner when I prosecute the train of its clear and resistless argumentations, I look only to the evidence that beams upon me from the subject itself, and not to the mind which has been so constructed as to be the recipient of that evidence. It is thus that physical science may, up to its proudest altitudes, have become the mental acquirement of him who has never once cast a regard on the mental physiology—and we should be doing what is preposterous, we should be inverting the experimental order of things, did we insist that the scholar should have a clear insight into the machinery of his intellectual powers, ere we asked him to set that machinery agoing, or by a busy forthputting of these powers to attain a clear insight upon the other departments of human contemplation.

12. Men judged well and reasoned well on a thousand objects of contemplation, long before the mental acts of judging and reasoning became the objects of contemplation themselves. When these in their turn became the distinct objects of thought, they underwent the same treatment as all the other objects of thought do when treated philosophically—that is, they were grouped and classified according to their resemblances into the various modes of ratiocination. Still the soundness of all the different reasonings was felt, long before that logic\* had pronounced upon it. It was not logic that first authorized the reasonings—but logic went forth, as it were, on the previous confident reasonings of men, just as the philosophic inquirer goes forth among those phenomena which constitute the materials of a science, and groups or arranges them according to their common observed

\* But we must here warn the reader against the error of confounding, in whole or in part, the sciences either of logic or of ethics with the science of the mental physiology. It is true, that one might reason well on any specific object of thought, anterior to the study of logic. But it is as true, that one might study and acquire logic, anterior to and apart from his study of the mental physiology. The acts of reasoning and judging, viewed as mental acts or phenomena, are objects of the latter science; but these form the objects of an inquiry altogether different from the question that respects the goodness of the reasonings or of the judgments—a question which it is the office of logic to decide.



qualities. We dispute not the use of logic—for the study of it implies, first, attention to the actual specimens or examples of valid argumentation—and then, a recognition by the mind of what that is which constitutes its validity—and we cannot well be so engaged without becoming more expert both in the practice of reasoning and in the detection of any flaw or infirmity in the process. All we affirm is, that good and bad reasoning were felt to be such, before that any reflex cognizance was taken of them. It is not by an antecedent prescription of logic that men defer to the authority of proofs—but it is out of antecedently felt and recognised proofs that the prescriptions of logic are framed. It was not necessary first to devise a right system of logic, that from it men might learn to reason conclusively and well—but this system is constructed upon an after survey of those good and conclusive reasonings, which, anterior to its guidance, had come forth on the field of human observation. The completion of a right system of logic is therefore not indispensable to the practice of sound reasoning, either in the business of life or in the sciences—neither does it follow that an erroneous system would materially hinder the work of prosperous investigation, in any quarter to which the intellect of man might betake itself. The class of the logicians might differ among themselves; or collectively they might fail in adjusting and building up a sound theory out of those existing materials, which, in the shape of sound judgments and sound reasonings, have been produced or are being produced every day by every other class of inquirers. So that apart from logic, and even in the midst of confusion and contrariety amongst the masters in the science, the general mind of society might be proceeding rightly onward, and multiplying the known truths of all the other sciences; and that whether they are truths which lie at a great depth and are fetched upward as it were by an act of shrewd intuition, or lie at a great distance and are reached forward by a consecutive train of argument. Each process may be most correctly done by the immediate agent, whether or not it be correctly described by the logician who is looking over him.

13. It should be remarked however that even in the study of universal Logic, the mind is not at all times studying itself. It is not necessarily looking inwards, when attending either to the modes or to the principles of reasoning. It, for example, lays confident hold on the truth of the axiom that every event must have a cause: or, proceeding on the constancy of nature, that a

like result is always to be anticipated in like circumstances—and in so doing it may be looking objectively and not subjectively. We are not to confound the act of the mind in judging with the thing that the mind judges of. It is a mistake that the science of mental physiology envelopes, as it were, the sciences of Logic and Ethics. The science of the mental physiology takes cognizance of the various states of the mind as phenomena, and groups them into laws or classes according to their observed resemblances. But this is a different employment from that of estimating either what is sound in morals or sound in reasoning. The question, what are the states of emotion or the intellectual states whereof the mind is susceptible, is another question altogether from what that is which constitutes the right and wrong in character, or what that is which constitutes the right and wrong in argument. Mental physiology has been too much blended with the sciences of Ethics and Logic, so as to be regarded in some degree as identical studies. They are not so. It is only when the first principles whether of Logic or of Ethics are controverted, that we are thrown back as it were on our own minds, to take a view there, of what the laws are, whether of human feeling or of human thought. When there is a denial of first principles, this is the only way left to us, of meeting either the moral or the intellectual scepticism. We have no other resource than simply to state the mind's original and instinctive and withal resistless tendencies, whether in matters of belief or in matters of sentiment. It is at this part only of a logical or ethical discussion, that the constitution of the mind comes into notice as a direct object of contemplation. There is a certain obstinate scepticism which cannot be reasoned against, and which can be contravened in no other way, than by an affirmation of the mind's instinctive confidence in those principles which constitute both the basis and the cement of all reasoning.

14. It is of importance to remark how confidently, and withal how correctly these first principles of belief were proceeded on, ere they were adverted to as parts of the mind's constitution. The phenomena of belief are antecedent to any notice or knowledge on our part of the laws or the principles of belief. Men achieved the intellectual process legitimately, ere the legitimacy of the process was traced or recognised. From the beginning of the world man's faith in the constancy of nature was as vigorously in operation as now—and, for many ages before that it was announced as one of the instincts of the human understand-



ing, did it serve for man's practical guidance both in the business of life, and in the prosecution of all the sciences. And what is true of the infancy of the species is also true of the infancy of each individual. It is with his rational as with his animal economy. Each goeth on prosperously and well, without any reflex view of the operations of either. It would appear that from the very outset of the education of the senses, there are certain original principles of belief which are in most efficient play; and the practical result of it is the infant's sound education. The following are the admirable observations of Dr. Thomas Brown on the habitudes and powers of the little reasoner—and we bring them forward that we may discriminate more clearly between a mental process as done by one individual, and the same process as described by another individual who is looking over him. After having analyzed the process of an infant's mind, he says, "I am aware that the application to an infant, of a process of reasoning expressed in terms of such grave and formal philosophic nomenclature, has some chance of appearing ridiculous. But the reasoning itself is very different from the terms employed to express it, and is truly as simple and natural as the terms, which our language obliges us to employ in expressing it, are abstract and artificial. The infant, however, in his feeling of the similarity of antecedents and consequents, and of the necessity therefore of a new antecedent where the consequent is different, has the reasoning but not the terms. He does not form the proposition as universal and applicable to cases that have not yet existed; but he feels it in every particular case as it occurs. That he does truly reason with at least as much subtlety as is involved in the process now supposed, cannot be doubted by those who attend to the manifest results of his little inductions, in those acquisitions of knowledge which show themselves in the actions, and I may say almost in the very looks of the little reasoner—at a period long before that to which his own remembrance is afterwards to extend, when, in the maturer progress of his intellectual powers, the darkness of eternity will meet his eye alike, whether he attempts to gaze on the past or on the future; and the wish to know the events with which he is afterwards to be occupied and interested, will not be more unavailing than the wish to retrace events that were the occupation and interest of the most important years of his existence. . . . Even then many a process of ratiocination is going on, which might have served as an example of strict logic to Aris-

tote himself; and which affords results far more valuable to the individual reasoner, than all the contents of all the folios of the crowd of that great logician's scholastic commentators."

15. Whatever then may be involved in the formation of a right system of logic—whether the logician for this purpose should have to classify the processes of reasoning, or to be studiously observant of the mental phenomena, that is to say, whether he should have to look objectively or subjectively, it is conceivable of his peculiar work that it may be done either well or ill, and the work of all other inquirers in all the other departments of human thought may go on vigorously and prosperously, notwithstanding. One man may work a machine well, though another should altogether fail in the description of it—and this just holds as true of a reasoning piece of mechanism as of any other. The phenomena of belief, and of sound belief, as existing in the mind of one man, may have been incorrectly surveyed and stated by another acting in the capacity of his inspector—but that does not hinder, either the belief from being legitimate in itself, or from its having been arrived at legitimately. We should not insist at such length on a matter that seems so very obvious, did we not foresee the importance of a certain application to topics of Christian evidence that we shall have occasion to make of it. The direct work of the understanding both in Christianity and in the other branches of human investigation may be going on rightly, while that work may be very far from being either discerned rightly or described rightly. The understanding may understand other things, and yet not understand itself. Its business may be well done, yet ill described. And while wholesome processes of inference, leading to wholesome and most valuable conclusions, are actually going on in every other department; it is conceivable that the logician, baffled in the work of his department, may have found it impracticable to make a thorough exposition of them.

16. And there are many respects, in which a direct process of the understanding admits not of being closely or completely followed up by any reflex cognizance that might afterwards be taken of it. We know, for example, that there are degrees of evidence, and degrees of weaker or stronger belief corresponding thereunto. There is a sort of general proportion between the evidence for a thing and the impression of its credibility. Yet who can take account of these impressions? Who can take an accurate measure of their intensity? Who can construct a rela-

tive scale, by which the degrees of proof and the degrees of conviction shall be placed in right correspondence together—and then tell in every instance, whether the inquirer's confidence is in just proportion to the evidence that has been presented to him? Yet practically and really the confidence will grow with the evidence, and may be in right proportion thereunto, though any statement of the degree or the proportion be utterly impossible. A man of rightly constituted understanding may judge rightly in every instance; while, in no one instance, might any man, though endowed with the most subtle or powerful understanding upon earth, be able to assign numerically how strong the judgment ought to be, in the given proofs or likelihoods of that particular question which the mind may happen to entertain. A peasant, for example, of sound intellect, may give to a certain story the very degree of credit which rightfully belongs to it. The appearances of its truth, the seeming honesty of the witness, the whole turn and style of his relation, the internal and circumstantial evidence which it possesses—all these may have made their impression, and their just impression upon him. Other witnesses may be conceived to superadd their testimony—and the conviction may be strengthened, and strengthened in the fair and right proportion too, with every accession to the evidence. He, sitting in the direct capacity of a judge in the narrative, may be rightly impressed with all that is brought into the field of his notice—and in the rate of his conviction, he may be keeping an equal pace with the evidence as it grows and multiplies around him. But another acting in the capacity of an inspector over him, whether as a logician or a mental physiologist, may be utterly unable to estimate what the intensity of his belief is, or whether it accurately corresponds to the degree of probability that lies in the existing evidence. In other words, the direct process may be going on rightly, while a full reflex cognizance thereof may be utterly impossible. It goes on rightly with the child at the outset of his natural education—although it be impossible to trace it metaphysically. It goes on rightly with the unlettered workman—and the results of it are neither less true and important in themselves, nor less valuable to him; although in this case both a metaphysical description of the process, and a logical estimate of the proof had been alike impossible.

17. Were these principles rightly appreciated, it would serve to qualify, and, we indeed think, to do away the contempt which



is often felt and expressed for the popular understanding.\* When it is said of the common people that they are not logicians; this may be true, if it be meant that they seldom take a reflex view of the processes of intellect, and are strangers to the terms of that nomenclature by which these processes are described. But that is not to hinder their going most correctly and intelligently through the processes themselves. Though incapable of the reflex, they may be abundantly capable of the direct process—and on a thousand subjects calling forth the exercise of mind, but which are apart from the subject of mind itself, they do evince a shrewdness and penetration for which too little credit is given to them. Generally speaking, an unlettered workman knows nothing of the philosophy of testimony—yet without this knowledge he may be accurately impressed by the importance of any actual or specific testimony which is brought within his reach. On the strength of those instinctive principles of belief which are in busy operation within him, though he himself hath never taken account of them; and on the strength of his general and accumulated experience—he may have a very correct sense of

\* “It has been frequently remarked, that the justest and most efficient understandings are often possessed by men who are incapable of stating to others, or even to themselves, the grounds on which they proceed in forming their decisions. In some instances I have been disposed to ascribe this to the faults of early education; but, in other cases, I am persuaded, that it was the effect of active and imperious habits in quickening the evanescent processes of thought, so as to render them untraceable by the memory; and to give the appearance of *intuition* to what was in fact the result of a train of reasoning so rapid as to escape notice. This I conceive to be the true theory of what is generally called *common sense*, in opposition to book-learning; and it serves to account for the use which has been made of this phrase by various writers, as synonymous with intuition.

“These seemingly instantaneous judgments have always appeared to me as entitled to a greater share of our confidence than many of our more deliberate conclusions; inasmuch as they have been forced as it were on the mind by the lessons of long experience; and are as little liable to be biassed by temper or passion, as the estimates we form of the distances of visible objects. They constitute, indeed, to those who are habitually engaged in the busy scenes of life a sort of peculiar *faculty*, analogous, both in its origin and in its use, to the *coup d’œil* of the military engineer, or to the quick and sure tact of the medical practitioner, in marking the diagnostics of disease.”

“An anecdote which I heard, many years ago, of a late very eminent Judge (Lord Mansfield), has often recurred to my memory, while reflecting on these apparent inconsistencies of intellectual character. A friend of his, who possessed excellent natural talents, but who had been prevented, by his professional duties as a naval officer, from bestowing on them all the cultivation of which they were susceptible, having been recently appointed to the government of Jamaica, happened to express some doubts of his competency to preside in the Court of Chancery. Lord Mansfield assured him, that he would find the difficulty not so great as he apprehended. ‘Trust,’ he said, ‘to your own good sense in forming your opinions; but beware of attempting to state the grounds of your judgments. The judgment will probably be right—the argument will infallibly be wrong.’”—Stewart’s “Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind,” vol. ii. p. 103, &c., second edition.

the verisimilitudes that belong to many a question. The whole of the judging process may have been accurately gone through by him, though the metaphysique of the process should be wholly inaccessible to himself, or even though it should be equally inaccessible to the most subtle and philosophical of discerners. This does not hinder the process from going on rightly. The mechanism of the inner man works, though he never looks at the working of it. The judgment, which is part of that mechanism, may do its part and do it soundly and well—so as that evidence shall have its just impression upon him, though the philosophy of that evidence was never once the subject of any reflex investigation.

18. The testimony of the early Christians to the miracles of the evangelical record, has from time to time been addressed to the public by a series of writers who have very ably urged and expounded it. And in many thousands of instances it has had its proper effect on those who attended to it. The consistency and sincerity by which the whole narrative is so obviously pervaded—the number and opportunities of the original witnesses, and the manner in which their testimony has been sustained by the close and continuous succession of others who came after them—the rapid propagation of Christianity in the face of opposition, each of its friends having, in the very fact of his conversion, left his own distinct confirmation behind him, and each of its enemies having done the same thing in the fact of his silence—these topics have undergone repeated elucidation in the hands of the defenders of Christianity, and the felt force of them on the minds of the readers was not countervailed by anything like another force felt to be equal or superior, in the merely miraculous character of the events which were related. It had doubtless been all along the feeling that a miracle required a greater weight and amount of testimony to make it credible than an ordinary event. But it never, we believe, was imagined till about the middle of the last century, that such in the very nature of a miracle was its unconquerable resistance to proof, as to place it beyond the reach and possibility of being established by any testimony, whatever may be its character and whatever its abundance. This discovery was not made in the act of attending to the specific miracles of the New Testament, or of weighing the specific testimonies by which they are supported. It is a discovery grounded on the considerations of a general logic which takes cognizance either of the principles of reasoning or of the pro-



perties of the reasoning mind. It never, we believe, was suggested to any mind, when immediately engaged in the direct process of viewing or of estimating the actual evidence for the miracles of the gospel. It is altogether the fruit of a reflex process, which, terminate as it might, leaves the direct process to go on very much as before. We believe it of any candid and intelligent man that, after the study of Mr. Hume's Essay on Miracles, he, on betaking himself again to the study of the evangelical narratives and of all its vouchers, cannot help being impressed just as he wont to be. The speculation may stagger him; and he labour and be at a loss when trying to adjust the metaphysics of the general question. But in reading Paley or Littleton or Butler, he does not feel that countervailing force in the mere idea of a miracle which the Scottish metaphysician has ascribed to it. It is on the general question only that he is bewildered—for when engaged with the particular question of the Christian miracles—when in contrast with the *ipsa corpora* of this latter question, his old convictions return to him. In the act of reasoning on the immediate subject-matter of the New Testament history, his invincible tendency is to think and feel as before. It is when he reasons upon the reasoning that he gets involved again in helpless obscurity. This new principle of human belief he may find it exceedingly difficult satisfactorily to dispose of; but from what himself feels he may gather the strong and general apprehension, that with the phenomena of human belief it is not certainly in accordance.

19. The treatment which Mr. Hume's argument has met with in the two countries of England and Scotland is strikingly in unison with the genius of the respective people. The *savans* of our nation have certainly a greater taste and inclination for the reflex process, while it is more the property of our southern neighbours to enter vigorously and immediately, and with all that instinctive confidence wherewith nature has endowed us, on the business of the direct one. Our general tendency is to date our argument from a higher point than the English do—to reason, for example, about reasoning, before we proceed to reason about the matter on hand. Nay, we are apt to be so far misled, as to think that we should thoroughly comprehend the nature and properties of the instrument of ratiocination before we proceed to the use of it. We must do this, it is thought, else we do not begin at the beginning—though, in fact, this were just such a beginning as that of the labourer, who should imagine

that ere he enters with the spade in his hand on the work of digging, he must first have computed the powers of its wedge, or ascertained the specific weight and cohesion of its materials. There is, upon an infinity of subjects, much intellectual labour that may be most prosperously gone through without any anterior examination on our part of the intellectual faculty. Our disposition in many a question is to move a previous question, which must be first settled ere we hold ourselves in a condition for starting fair with the one immediately before us. The English, again, to borrow another phrase from their own parliamentary language, are for proceeding to the order of the day. And they are not deceived in the result, just because nature has not deceived them, nor has she given original principles to her children for the purpose of leading them astray. They are like men set forth on the survey of a landscape, and who proceed immediately to the business of seeing—whereas the others, ere they shall have any dealing with the objects of vision, must have settled their account with the instrument of vision; so that, while the former are looking broadly and confidently outwards on the scene of observation, the latter are speculating on the organ and its retina, or have their thoughts intently fastened on that point whence the optic nerve issues from its primitive obscurity among the convolutions of the brain. Now, this is what our friends in the south seem to have no patience for. Their characteristic is not subtlety of discrimination on the powers and principles of the mind, but often admirable soundness and sagacity in the direct application of their powers to the practical object of coming to a right judgment on all important questions. Dr. Paley stands forth in full dimensions as an exemplar of this class. Strong and healthful in his faculties, he turns them to the immediate business before him, without one reflex look at the faculties themselves. He bestows on the argument of Hume a few touches of his sagacity, but soon flings it as if in distaste or intolerance away from him. We hold this to have been the general reception of it in our sister kingdom; and while taken up in grave and philosophic style by Campbell, and Brown, and Murray, and Cook, and Somerville, and the Edinburgh Reviewers, it seems to have made comparatively little impression on the best authors of England—on Penrose, for example, who bestows on it but slight and cursory notice, and Le Bas,\* who almost

\* The valuable contributions which Penrose and Le Bas have made to the argument from miracles, will be noticed afterwards.

thinks it enough to have barely characterized it as a wretched fallacy.

20. Paley concludes his preparatory considerations to his book on the Evidences with the following short practical answer to Hume's essay:—"But the short consideration which, independently of every other, convinces me that there is no solid foundation in Mr. Hume's conclusion, is the following: When a theorem is proposed to a mathematician, the first thing he does with it is to try it upon a simple case; and if it produce a false result, he is sure that there must be some mistake in the demonstration. Now, to proceed in this way with what may be called Mr. Hume's theorem: If twelve men, whose probity and good sense I had long known, should seriously and circumstantially relate to me an account of a miracle wrought before their eyes, and in which it was impossible that they should be deceived; if the governor of the country, hearing a rumour of this account, should call these men into his presence, and offer them a short proposal, either to confess the imposture or submit to be tied up to a gibbet; if they should refuse with one voice to acknowledge that there existed any falsehood or imposture in the case; if this threat were communicated to them separately, yet with no different effect; if it was at last executed; if I myself saw them, one after another, consenting to be racked, burnt, or strangled, rather than give up the truth of their account; still, if Mr. Hume's rule be my guide, I am not to believe them. Now I undertake to say, that there is not a sceptic in the world who would not believe them, or who would defend such incredulity." There is something nationally characteristic in their respective treatments of the same subject by the Scottish Hume and the English Paley. It exhibits a contest between sound sense and subtle metaphysics. Paley is quite right in his concluding deliverance. The falsehood of the twelve men, in the circumstances and with the characteristics which he ascribes to them, would be more improbable than all the miracles put together of the New Testament. It is a correct judgment that he gives, but he declines to state the principles of the judgment. Nor is it necessary in ten thousand instances that a man should be able to assign the principles of his judgment, in order to make that judgment a sound and unexceptionable one. There is many a right intellectual process undergone by those who never once reflect upon the process nor attempt the description of it. The direct process is one thing, the reflex view of it is another.



Paley sees most instantly and vividly the falsehood of Hume's theorem in a particular case, and this satisfies him of a mistake in the demonstration. But this is a different thing from undertaking to show the fallacy of the demonstration on its own general principles—as different as were the refutation of a mathematical proposition by the measurement of a figure constructed in the terms of that proposition, from the general and logical refutation of it grounded on the import of the terms themselves. This is certainly a desirable thing to be done; and all we have to say at present is, that this is what Paley has failed to accomplish.

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## CHAPTER II.

### ON MAN'S INSTINCTIVE BELIEF IN THE CONSTANCY OF NATURE.

1. WHEN a child strikes a table for the first time with a spoon, its delight in the consequent noise is not more obvious than the confidence wherewith it anticipates a repetition of the noise on a repetition of the stroke. That the same antecedent should be followed by the same consequent does not appear to be the lesson of a protracted experience. The anticipation of a similar result from a similar conjunction of circumstances appears to be as strong in infancy as in manhood. We hold it to be not an acquired but an original faith, because we perceive it in full operation as far back as we can observe in the history of a human creature. We are not sensible of a period in the history of our own mind when this lesson had yet to be learned—neither can we perceive any indication in the youngest children, that they are destitute of this faith, or that they have yet subsequently to acquire it. Therefore we call it an instinctive faith—not the fruit of observation or experience, however much these may afterwards confirm it; so as to verify the glorious conclusion of an unfailing harmony between the actual truth of things, and the implanted tendencies of that intellect which the Creator hath given us.

2. It is a frequent and perhaps a natural impression that faith in the constancy of nature is not an instinct antecedent to experience, but the fruit of that experience, produced by it at first, and strengthened by every new or repeated experience of the constancy of nature afterwards. But it has been well remarked



by Dr. Brown, that no repetition, however frequent of the same sequence can account for our anticipation of its recurrence, without such an original principle of belief as we are now contending for. We admit that there is no logical connexion between the proposition that a certain event has happened once in given circumstances, and the proposition that the same event will happen always in the same circumstances. But neither is there any logical connexion between the proposition that the event has happened a thousand times in certain circumstances, and the proposition that in the same circumstances it will always so happen. The conversion of the past into the future, is made, not in virtue of a logical inference, but in virtue of an instinctive expectation, and this at whatever stage the conversion may have been made. It is as confidently made at the dawn as at the maturity of the understanding—and after one observation of a sequence, as after twenty or any number of observations however great. We have not been schooled by experience into our belief of nature's constancy. Experience can only inform us of the past. It tells what has been—but we need another informant beside memory to assure us of what is to be. Experience tells us of the past constancy of nature—but experience alone or memory alone can give no intimation of its future constancy. This irresistible persuasion comes to us from another quarter. It forms a distinct principle in the frame or workmanship of our intellectual system. It is a befitting theme of gratitude and wonder that this instinctive faith from within should be responded to by the unexcepted fulfilment of Nature's actual and abiding constancy from without. But the one is not a derivative from the other. The two are in harmony—but it is a contingent harmony.

3. The use of experience is not to strengthen our faith in the constancy of nature's sequences, but to inform us what the sequences actually are. We do not need to be made surer than we are already that the progressions of nature are invariable, but we need to learn the steps of each progression. As far as we can discover of the human mind, it counts—and has at all times, from its earliest capacities of thought, counted—on the same antecedents being followed up by the same consequents. It is not the office of experience to lesson us into this confidence. But experience is indispensable to teach us, which be the causal antecedents and which be the consequents related to them by the tie of invariableness, in those successions that are taking place

around us. Our object in the repetition of an experiment is not to be made sure that what nature has done once in certain circumstances, she will in the same circumstances do again. But it is to ascertain what the circumstances really be which are essential to the result in question. The truth is, that in that assemblage of circumstances which precedes some certain event, there may only be one, or so many of them, that have causal influence upon the result, and the rest may be mere accompaniments, whose presence is not necessary to the production of it. It is to distinguish the causal antecedents from the merely casual ones that an experiment has often to be varied, or done over again. It is not that we ever have the least suspicion of Nature as if she fluctuated in her processes. But it is to disentangle these processes from that crowd of accessaries, wherewith they are at times beset or encompassed, that we have so repeatedly to question her. For this purpose we withdraw certain ingredients from the assemblage. We supply certain others. We mix them up in various proportions—and all this not to strengthen our belief in the regularity of nature, but to discover what the trains or successions are according to which this regularity proceeds. We are not sure that the instinct by which we are led to anticipate the same result in the same circumstances is stronger in manhood than in infancy. But in manhood we know the result, and we know the circumstances. This seems the whole fruit of experience. It teaches, not the strength or invariableness of the connexion that runs through all nature, but it teaches the terms of that connexion.

4. And it is instructive to observe the real process of an infant's mind, during that education by which it becomes acquainted with surrounding nature. When it strikes the wooden table with a spoon, it needs not repeat the stroke for the purpose of obtaining a surer or firmer expectation of the consequent noise. That expectation is probably as confident at the first as afterward; and it is of importance to remark, that at the outset of its experience it is quite general and indiscriminate. For instance, it would anticipate the same noise by striking the spoon against any surface whatever, as when placed on a carpet, or on the level of a smooth sandy beach. Originally, it would expect the same noise by striking on a soft yielding substance that it did by striking on the hard table; and the office of experience is not to strengthen its hope of a similar result from a similar act, but in truth to correct the exuberance of that hope. It is to

teach it discrimination, and how, in the midst of a general resemblance, to mark those minuter differences which in fact present it with antecedents that are really different, and which should lead it to expect results that are different also. It is thus that the primary undirected and diffused expectation of meeting again with what it met once, in the act of striking with a spoon on a wooden surface, comes afterwards to be modified. It learns—not that there is a surer tie between the terms of nature's sequences than it imagined at the first, but it learns how to distinguish between the terms which are really different, though before it had vaguely confounded them. And so it is taught with each distinct antecedent to look for a distinct consequent—instead of expecting the same noise by the infliction of a stroke upon all surfaces, to expect no noise at all by a stroke upon the sand, and different sorts of noises by a stroke on different surfaces, whether wood, or metal, or stone, or liquid.\*

5. Now, this may explain how it is that our faith in the constancy of nature *appears* to grow with experience—and that, notwithstanding the obvious strength of this principle in very early childhood. After an infant has once struck the table with a spoon, and elicited the noise which it likes, it proceeds with all confidence to repeat the stroke—not on the table only, but on other substances, in expectation of a similar noise to that which had pleased and gratified it before. But it is speedily checked in this expectation. It learns, that with every difference in the antecedent circumstances there may be a difference in the

\* This phenomenon of the infant mind will be found not only to throw light on the origin and progress of our belief in testimony, but to accord with the surmises both of Dugald Stewart and Turgot, when they approximate to what we have long regarded as the true account or philosophy of the process described by the human mind in the formation of abstract and general ideas. The truth is, that our disposition to generalize by noticing the points of resemblance between different objects, often takes the precedence of our disposition to specialize by noticing their points of distinction or dissimilarity—and so, at the commencement of our mental history, we are liable to confound when we ought to discriminate. This observation, rightly applied, will be found to correct both the philosophy of Dr. Campbell and the scepticism of Hume on the subject of human testimony.

The following sentences from Dugald Stewart, and from Condorcet's *Life of Turgot*, will evince the existence of this thought in embryo, or as an undeveloped germ in the minds of both these philosophers.

“This remark becomes, in my opinion, much more luminous and important, by being combined with another very original one, which is ascribed to Turgot by Condorcet, and which I do not recollect to have seen taken notice of by any later writer on the human mind. According to the common doctrine of logicians, we are led to suppose that our knowledge begins in an accurate and minute acquaintance with the characteristic properties of individual objects; and that it is only by the slow exercise of comparison and abstraction, that we attain to the notion of classes or *genera*. In opposition to this idea, it was a



result; and it further learns that there may often be real differences which escape its observation. Now, the longer it has been accustomed to witness the same phenomenon in the same *ostensible* circumstances, it becomes the more confident that these are the only essential circumstances to the result, or at least that the ostensible circumstances always involve the essential or the real ones. Should it awake in the morning, and perceive the nurse or mother by its side and smiling over it, then, were there but a moment of prior consciousness, and the recollection of what had happened yesterday, it might on the next morning open its eyes with the expectation of being again regaled by the same spectacle. We are not sure but that the confidence of this expectation would be as strong, if not stronger, at the first than ever afterwards. Every disappointment, in fact, would weaken it; for the infant would thus learn, that the presence of the causal antecedent, which gave rise to the phenomenon, was not always involved in the circumstance of its emerging from the darkness of sleep to the visible objects of day. Still it holds true, that the fewer the disappointments were to which it was exposed, the original confidence would be less weakened. The recurrence of the same thing for the days of a week would diminish its apprehension of a disappointment or failure, and still more for the days of a month or the days of a year. Yet we are not sure if any experience, however lengthened, would ever beget a stronger confidence than that original

maxim of Turgot's, that some of our most abstract and general notions are among the earliest we form. What meaning he annexed to this maxim, we are not informed; but if he understood it in the same sense in which I am disposed to interpret it, he appears to me entitled to the credit of a very valuable suggestion with respect to the natural progress of human knowledge. The truth is, that our first perceptions lead us invariably to confound together things which have very little in common; and that the specific differences of individuals do not begin to be marked with precision till the powers of observation and reasoning have attained to a certain degree of maturity. To a similar indistinctness of perception are to be ascribed the mistakes, about the most familiar appearances, which we daily see committed by those domesticated animals with whose instincts and habits we have an opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted. As an instance of this, it is sufficient to mention the terror which a horse sometimes discovers in passing on the road a large stone, or the waterfall of a mill."—Stewart's *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, vol. ii. pp. 242-44.

"M. Turgot croyait qu'on s'était trompé en imaginant, qu'en général l'esprit n'acquiert des idées générales ou abstraites que par la comparaison d'idées plus particulières. Au contraire, nos premières idées sont très-générales, puisque ne voyant d'abord qu'un petit nombre de qualités, notre idée renferme tous les êtres auxquels ces qualités sont communes. En nous éclairant, en examinant davantage, nos idées deviennent plus particulières sans jamais atteindre le dernier terme; et ce qui a pu tromper les métaphysiciens, c'est qu'alors précisément nous apprenons que ces idées sont plus générales que nous ne l'avions d'abord supposé."—*Vie de Turgot*, p. 159. Berne, 1787.



and unshaken confidence that is felt prior to all experience. It seems the primary faith of every mind, that there shall be a constant recurrence of the same effect in the same circumstances. It is a subsequent lesson to this, that the circumstances are liable to unexpected variation; and so, a protracted experience may be requisite to ascertain when they are more and when they are less liable, or whether they have sustained variation at all. Still, even in cases where the last conclusion has been come at, and with the advantage of a long experience in its favour, the resulting anticipation may not be of greater strength than was that original anticipation wherewith the infant looked for a repetition of the sound from its first repetition of a stroke. This long experience does not act as a confirmer to strengthen the first anticipation. It only acts as a restorative against the weakening effect of a subsequent experience, and by which it may, as if by the removal of a disturbing force, bring the confidence, not beyond, but bring it up to the strength which it originally had.

6. It will thus be seen what the precise object is, of repetition in experiments. It is not to strengthen our faith in the uniformity of nature. It is not to assure ourselves any more than we are already that the same antecedents will always be followed up by the same consequents. It is to ascertain what the precise causal antecedents actually are. For this purpose we introduce variations into the circumstances of the experiment. We supply new conditions. We abstract old ones. We make changes both on the presence and the proportion of certain ingredients—and thus learn to distinguish what is merely accessory from what is efficient in the process. We come to fix on the real and proper antecedents at last—and when in an *experimentum crucis*, these are admitted and no other, we decide finally that they and they alone are essential to the result in question.

7. Experience does not add to the confidence wherewith we look for the same result in the same circumstances. It may rather be said to correct or to modify that confidence. It teaches us how liable we are to be deceived by semblances; and that often there is an apparent similarity where there is no real one. In this case, when counting on a recurrence of the same, the presumption is thwarted by the occurrence of a different event. Instead of confidence, we, in certain views, learn caution and distrust at the school of experience—not that we ever question the invariableness wherewith the same antecedents are always related to the same consequents—but that we have learned how

under the guise of similarity there may not be sameness ; and that in virtue of some unseen difference in the circumstances, an unexpected difference in the result may arise from it.

8. But it is well for our future argument to distinguish what the confidence is which is lessened from what the confidence is which remains unshaken. The child's general confidence in the production of a noise by the stroke of its spoon on any surface has been thwarted and put an end to—but its special confidence in the production of a noise by the stroke of the spoon on its own wooden table continues as strong as at the first. There is no mistake in that original and instinctive faith of nature, by which we are led to expect that the same antecedents will be followed in invariable succession by the same consequents—and it is not this which is corrected by experience. But we are liable to a perpetual mistake, in confounding together as the same those antecedents which are really different—and it is the office of experience to correct this mistake, by teaching us so to discriminate as to distinguish between the things which are really different. There is a beautiful accordance between our primary instincts of belief, and the lessons of our ultimate experience. We set out strong in the presumption of nature's uniformity ; and in this we are disappointed at the first—only because we mistake nature, and confound when we ought to discriminate. In proportion as we learn to discriminate, the confidence is restored—and we find it was no mistake that nature proceeded by trains of invariable phenomena, and that the only fallacy lay in our mistaking and misreading the phenomena themselves. It is thus that in the further progress of experience the temporary cloud is dissipated ; and it at once appears that every process is steadfast, and that every instinct is sure—that nature puts no deceitful expectation, and whispers no false promises into the hearts of her children.

9. Let us now reassemble the different leading phenomena of man's belief in the constancy of nature. He in the first instance is furnished with this belief and feels it strongly, antecedently to experience. In the second instance, the experience does not add any further assurance to this primary and instinctive faith. It rather seems to check its anticipations, inasmuch that distrust rather than confidence in the results of experience seems to be the growth of our advancing observation. But this proceeds not from Nature being untrue to her promise, which in the shape of an original instinct she makes to all men, of always following up the same antecedents by the same consequents. It

proceeds from our imperfect observation, whether of the antecedents or consequents, by which we imagine them to be the same when they are really different. In proportion as this imperfect observation is rectified, the steadfastness of Nature becomes more manifest. The promise which she made to us at the outset is more and more vindicated—and we at length are fully reassured of an unexcepted harmony between the instincts of our internal constitution and the external truth of things.

10. We may thus perceive the consistency between two propositions which appear to be at variance. The first is that experience gives no addition of strength to our primary faith in the constancy of nature. The second is that the oftener we witness the same result in the same apparent circumstances, the more confidently do we look for that result in these circumstances in all time coming. It is not that we ever doubt the constancy of nature. The doubt is, whether the same causal antecedents which give rise to the result be always involved in the same apparent circumstances. Should the same individual regularly pass my window every day at the same hour for a month together, I by the end of that time should have acquired a pretty strong persuasion that at the wonted hour he would again make his appearance. It is obvious that this persuasion would become stronger with every new repetition of the phenomenon, till at length I might come to regularly count upon it with a very high feeling of probability upon its side. And yet in this instance, I may not at all know the causal antecedents of the appearances in question. There might be nothing at least in the ostensible antecedents to indicate the causal or real ones—nothing in the mere occurrence of the hour which can explain to me, why it is that this one person so regularly presents himself. It is enough, however, to find that so it is—and the longer or the oftener that so it is, the firmer will be my expectation of its recurrence. The expectation will, according to the various instances, attain to various degrees of strength—and in some will reach indefinitely near to moral certainty.

11. The same thing will happen, if in throwing a couple of dice, for a number of times there shall be the regular presentation of the same faces in both of them. The expectation of the phenomenon will gain in strength just with the continuance of it, and that anterior to our knowledge of its cause. Even previous to this knowledge it might approach to moral certainty, merely by the length and constancy of the repetition. Yet no



experience, however prolonged, will give a stronger assurance than we might have had at once by observing that the dice was loaded, and thus obtaining knowledge of the real antecedent.

12. There are cases when without the knowledge of, or at least without any reflection on the cause, this constancy of a recurrence will lead us to look for it with all the confidence of moral certainty. The return of the morning's light, and the recurrence of about two tides every day, are the examples of this which first occur to us. The causal antecedent of the former phenomenon may not be reflected on, and of the latter may not be known. Yet this does not affect the confidence wherewith we look forward to the repetition of them. It is a confidence which evidently grows with the number of repetitions, provided that these have occurred with undeviating constancy. Yet we are not sure if the unvarying experience of a whole lifetime will give a stronger assurance, than that wherewith a child expects the recurrence of a noise by striking its spoon upon the table after having heard it but once, or even by striking it upon any other surface before that experience had taught it to distinguish between that which is sonorous and that which is not so. The strength then of the primary confidence on the part of the child, and that of the acquired confidence on the part of the man, will be found to have originated in distinct causes. The former is anterior to experience, and an instinct of the understanding, by which, from the earliest dawn of thought, we feel assured that the same antecedents will always be followed up by the same consequents. The latter again is the fruit or the lesson of experience; and the effect, it should be remarked, is not to build up a confidence that is already perfect. That the same antecedents will be followed by the same consequents is a truth whereof we have the axiomatic certainty from the beginning of life to the close of it. But we often mistake the antecedents, thinking them to be the same when they are really different—and it is the office of experience to rectify this mistake. We may even never come to know the efficient antecedents at all, as in the case of the unlearned who are conversant with phenomena but have not so much as a thought about the causes of them, save that, in the circumstances by which these phenomena are wont to be preceded, their causes must be present or be somehow involved in them. The darkness of night is not the cause of the light of day—but they have learned by frequent observation, that, at the expiry of a certain period of darkness, the



cause of this light comes into operation. Experience does not tell that the same cause always produces the same effect. This we had been told previously. But experience tells what the circumstances are in which the same cause is to be met with—and the oftener we so meet with it, the greater is our confidence that in the same circumstances we shall meet with it and with its invariable consequent again. These two tellings are wholly distinct from each other. By the first we are assured of the invariable operation of causes. By the second we learn in what assemblage of circumstances the same causes are seldomer or oftener or always to be found. In regard to the first, there is the utmost strength of anticipation from the outset of our mental history. In regard to the second, there is a growing strength of anticipation which approaches indefinitely towards a full assurance.

13. That is well nigh to a full assurance wherewith we anticipate a high-water about every twelve hours. We can conceive this assurance to be disappointed. It is an imaginable case that there might have been the intermission of one tide—giving rise to an interval of somewhat more than twenty-four hours between two high-waters. Let us suppose the sea at its lowest ebb, at the very time when, according to the rate and regularity of all past experience, there should have been an intermediate high-water. The question is, On what evidence ought this to be believed?—or what force and character of proof can prevail over that confident expectation, which, on the strength of an observed constancy during all the years of our recollection, we had been led to form?

14. We shall not at present oppose to the strength of this expectation either the evidence of sense or the evidence of testimony. But there is a certain device of illustration which we shall employ, as being the most effectual preparative that we can think of for the evolving of our main argument.

15. Instead, then, of having the evidence of sense for this anomalous low-water—we can imagine the observer placed at a distance from the sea—and furnished with his information of every rise and fall in its level by means of a tide-index. The reality or the possibility of such an instrument is not essential to the validity of our argument. A hypothetical reasoning may not be the less sound, because of its imaginary data—and, if we can demonstrate a perfect analogy between these data and others which are real, between the arbitrary conditions which we

find it convenient in the first instance to assume and the actual conditions of the question that waits to be resolved, then, by a substitution of the one for the other, we may arrive at the solution that is wanted.

16. We may conceive, then, that on the day of the anomalous low-water, the tide-index also remained low. To set aside all but my own personal experience in the matter, there might have been a thousand instances of observed regularity on my part, in regard to the occurrence of high-water—in which case the probability against the occurrence of an anomalous low-water would be as a thousand to one. It may further be conceived, that though on all the other thousand occasions, I observed a perfect harmony between the phenomena of high and low water and the indications of the instrument—yet that on one occasion the instrument deceived me—it having anomalously stood at low-water though there was high-water on the sea as usual. In this case my expectation of a high-water grounded on past experience will prevail over my faith in the information of the tide-index. The truth is, that against the actual occurrence of the anomalous low-water, the probability is as a thousand to one—whereas against a wrong deposition on the part of the instrument the probability is only as a thousand to two. There is a double chance for an irregularity on the part of the instrument, rather than an irregularity on the part of the ocean—and I am therefore not yet dislodged from my belief that though the instrument did attest a low-water, the high-water took place as usual.

17. One can imagine a still greater degree of irregularity on the part of the tide-index. The number of failures (including the case in question), may have been five or ten or twenty or fifty—in which case the chances of error in the information given would just be represented by these respective numbers—and I would persist in my conviction of there having been a high-water with a strength equal in the first case to that of two to one, in the second of five to one, in the third of ten to one, in the fourth of twenty to one, and in the fifth with a strength equal to that of fifty to one.

18. But we can imagine an instrument that never misgave or made a false indication in the whole course of our experience. We may have observed the stated recurrence of a high-water at the usual interval a thousand times, and as many times we may have without fail observed the rise in the tide-index which corresponds thereunto. That a low-water should occur instead of

the next expected high-water is a thing improbable in the ratio of a thousand to one. That the high-water should occur, and yet the index point to a low-water is also a thing improbable, and in the same ratio of a thousand to one. The one improbability exactly balances or neutralizes the other. The mind is left in a midway state or in a state of pure scepticism on the question—and it remains to be seen whether it is possible, by means of any accession to the testimony of these tide-indices, to arrive at a legitimate belief in the occurrence of an anomalous low-water; or, to express it otherwise, belief in the violation of a wonted order to which we never had witnessed a single exception in the whole of our past experience.

19. It may be conceived in this way. The same instrument which, set in a particular way, so relates it to the water of the sea as to indicate the variations of its level, may be so set as to relate it similarly to other water of variable level, as to that of a pond or a well or a vessel, the liquid in all which was subject to alternate elevations and depressions. We have already made the supposition of having observed the unfailing punctuality of its informations in regard to the tides—so as to establish the probability of a thousand to one in favour of that information being true. But should it inform us of a low-water at the time when, on the strength of a thousand past instances, we were left to expect a high-water, the probability for the truth of this information is exactly countervailed by an equal probability opposed to it. By applying the same instrument, however, to the measurement of other fluctuations in the level of water beside those of the sea, the samples of its correct indication may be multiplied indefinitely—and instead of a thousand observed instances in which it spoke the truth, we may, in virtue of this larger application, be able to allege twenty thousand. After this it remains no longer a contest of equal experiences, but of unequal—and the difference is all in favour of the witnessing instrument. If it depone to a matter against which, apart from its own information, there is the probability of a thousand to one, it should now be recollected that in the verity of this information there is a probability of twenty thousand to one; or, in other words, we have a probability of twenty to one for the anomalous low-water. So that with the evidence of one instrument alone, the violation of a long-observed order may be abundantly established; and it is a possible thing that the experience which stands opposed to the testimony of this solitary witness may, singly in the



witness itself, be greatly surpassed by the experience in its favour.\*

20. Or the accession to the evidence of the tide-index may be obtained in another way. Instead of widening the range of its application, so as to collect twenty thousand instances of its accuracy wherewith to overbear the thousand instances of regular high-water, the very same power and superiority of evidence could be had by means of another tide-index. We have supposed a number of these instruments which, either from their various mechanisms, or from their being constructed with more or less skill, gave forth their depositions with more or less accuracy. Let us compute the effect then which lies in the concurrence of two testimonies to the fact of an anomalous low-water—one given by a tide-index of yet unfailing correctness, and another which in the thousand instances of regular high-water failed no less than fifty times. Still it has been twenty times right for once being wrong; and the presumption in favour of its testimony for any indifferent thing is just as twenty to one—though in favour of its testimony for an anomalous low-water in the face of a thousand regular high-waters it be only as one to fifty. This however does not prevent the multiple effect of its evidence when united with that of another instrument. This tide-index, which has been right without exception in a thousand instances, has acquired the probability of a thousand to one for its next deposition—and, should the other instrument which has been right twenty times for one, agree in the same deposition, the united testimony of both has precisely the force of twenty thousand to one for any indifferent thing—and in the present case of twenty to one for an anomalous low-water. There is no one versant in the doctrine of probabilities who will dispute the soundness or accuracy of these conclusions—a doctrine not only of mathematical precision in the abstract—but whose precision is verified on the average in all the practical affairs of experience and human life. The probability arising from the concurrence of the two testimonies which we have now specified is just as we have stated

\* The accuracy of the tide-gauge may obtain enhanced confirmation by observing the truth of its depositions, not at the highest and lowest levels of the tide only, but at all intermediate ones—so that our experience of this accuracy may greatly overpass our experience of the regularity whether of high or low water.

This mathematical style of reasoning on a question which respects the truth of Christianity will be excused—first, by those who feel it to be effective; and secondly, because if effective, it is the best fitted to neutralize the mischievous influence superadded to the scepticism of Hume by the great name of La Place.

it. And to vary the supposition—should the tide-index which has failed ten times in a thousand, agree in its evidence with the tide-index that has failed twenty times—still the former has only been wrong once in a hundred times and the other once in fifty—so that their united testimony has in it the strength of five thousand to one for an indifferent thing, and five to one for an anomalous low-water. It were easy to calculate the results in all other instances of agreement. The joint testimony of the tide-gauge that has failed five times with that which has failed fifty times has in it the absolute force of four thousand to one, or the relative force of four to one for an anomalous low-water. The joint effect of the one that has failed five times with the one that has failed ten is equivalent to twenty in favour of the same fact—and should the evidence of the one that has failed twenty times be added to the two former, the testimony of all the three would have the force of no less than a million to one for any indifferent thing, or of a thousand to one for the anomalous deviation which is the subject of our argument.

21. On the subject of the amount of evidence that lies in the concurrence of two or more such notices as we are now specifying, it must be observed that these notices should be independent of each other. For example, when the tide-index B announces a low-water, it must not be because the tide-index A announces the same thing. Each by being similarly related to the waters of the sea is subject to a common influence from it—but neither should have any influence the one upon the other. It is easy to perceive that in the present instance they stand so disjointed, as to give us the advantage of all the united strength that lies in separate and independent testimonies. It is not because A gives a right deposition that B gives the same. B is sometimes wrong when A is right—and beside, each would operate precisely as it does though the other were removed or taken down.

22. By the concurrence of independent notices on the subject, the amount of evidence for an anomalous low-water may become indefinitely great. There may be other tide-indices, and that too of the best sort, in other houses beside our own—and each of which has never been known to present a false indication in the whole course of human experience. The concurrent testimony of two such instruments yields the probability of a thousand—of three no less than a million—till the number of distinct and independent testimonies be so great as to make the superiority of evidence quite overwhelming, and to afford practically the force

of an absolute moral certainty on the side of an anomalous low-water. Or, instead of an anomalous if it be called a miraculous low-water—this is only lengthening out the experience that we have had of Nature's regularity in this department of observation. Instead of one deviation in a thousand instances of observed constancy, the event in question may be the only deviation that has taken place in the regular succession of tides since the commencement of the world. To meet this we have just to imagine a tide-index that was never known to give forth a false intimation; and to overmatch this, we have just to imagine so many distinct and separate intimations from a certain number of such indices. The falsity of the instrument may be as great an anomaly or if you will as great a miracle as the phenomenon of which it tells—and the concurrence of a few such miracles may establish for the truth of the miracle deposed to as overwhelming a superiority of evidence as before. It remains to be seen how much or how little can be done in this way by living witnesses—but it seems very clear to us on the strength of the above reasoning, that at the mouth of two or three inanimate witnesses the truth of a miracle may be established.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### ON THE SUFFICIENCY OF HUMAN TESTIMONY FOR THE PROOF OF MIRACLES.

##### MR. HUME'S OBJECTION TO THE TRUTH OF MIRACLES.

##### SECTION I.—*On the Origin of our Belief in Testimony.*

1. THE following is Dr. Campbell's abstract of Hume's argument on the subject of miracles:—"Experience is our only guide in reasoning concerning matters of fact. Experience is in some things variable, in some things uniform. A variable experience gives rise only to probability; a uniform experience amounts to a proof. Probability always supposes an opposition of experiments and observations, where the one side is found to overbalance the other, and to produce a degree of evidence proportioned to the superiority. In such cases we must balance the opposite experiments, and deduct the lesser number from the greater, in order to know the exact force of the superior evidence. Our belief or assurance of any fact from the report of



eye-witnesses is derived from no other principle than experience ; that is, our observation of the veracity of human testimony, and of the usual conformity of facts to the report of witnesses. Now if the fact attested partakes of the marvellous, if it is such as has seldom fallen under our observation, here is a contest of two opposite experiences, of which the one destroys the other, as far as its force goes, and the superior can only operate on the mind by the force which remains. The very same principle of experience which gives us a certain degree of assurance in the testimony of witnesses, gives us also, in this case, another degree of assurance against the fact which they endeavour to establish, from which contradiction there necessarily arises a counterpoise, and mutual destruction of belief and authority. Further, if the fact affirmed by the witnesses, instead of being only marvellous, is really miraculous ; if, besides, the testimony considered apart and in itself amounts to an entire proof ; in that case there is proof against proof, of which the strongest must prevail, but still with a diminution of its force in proportion to that of its antagonist. A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature ; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. And if so, it is an undeniable consequence, that it cannot be surmounted by any proof whatever from testimony. A miracle, therefore, however attested, can never be rendered credible, even in the lowest degree."

2. And the following is the outset of Dr. Campbell's reply :—  
" In answer to this, I propose first to prove that the whole is built upon a false hypothesis. That the evidence of testimony is derived solely from experience, which seems to be an axiom of this writer, is at least not so incontestable a truth as he supposes it ; that, on the contrary, testimony hath a natural and original influence on belief, antecedent to experience, will, I imagine, easily be evinced. For this purpose, let it be remarked, that the earliest assent which is given to testimony by children, and which is previous to all experience, is in fact the most unlimited ; that by a gradual experience of mankind, it is gradually contracted, and reduced to narrower bounds. To say, therefore, that our diffidence in testimony is the result of experience, is more philosophical, because more consonant to truth, than to say that our faith in testimony has this foundation. Accordingly, youth, which is unexperienced, is credulous ; age on the contrary is dis-

trustful. Exactly the reverse would be the case were this author's doctrine just."

3. Such is the opening of the controversy between Hume and Campbell on the subject of miracles, and wherewith the latter ushers in his celebrated reply to the argument of the former. We have long stood in doubt of the validity of that reply, notwithstanding the singular acumen and dexterity and power of expression by which it is characterized. We still hold it to be neither a clear nor a conclusive one—and do therefore feel an insecurity and a want of completeness in the Christian defence, whenever this sceptical reasoning of Mr. Hume is again advanced by any of those more recent writers who have succeeded him on the side of infidelity.

4. We, in the first place, doubt whether he is right in the theory which he proposes respecting the origin of our faith in testimony. In opposition to Hume, who grounds it on experience, he makes it a principle *sui generis* in the mental constitution or an aboriginal instinct of the understanding. We shall, in the course of the following discussion, have to remark on certain phenomena of our belief in testimony which incline us to resolve it, with Mr. Hume, into our faith in the constancy of nature. But we are anxious to have it understood that the refutation which we shall venture to propose neither requires nor presupposes any absolute deliverance upon this question. We undertake to prove his conclusion to be wrong, not *because* but *although* his premises should be right. We are inclined to think them right. But though we should be in error here, this is not an error by which our counter-argument to Mr. Hume is in the least affected. It is of no consequence, whether we affirm with him the truth of his own principle respecting the origin of our faith in testimony. There is a difference between affirming it and allowing it. The latter is what we certainly do: and a refutation should be held all the more decisive, if it can afford to an adversary those very assumptions on which his argument is built.

5. But, secondly, though Dr. Campbell were right in the view he gave respecting the origin of our faith in testimony, we do not see that this is of decisive avail on his side of the controversy. Even though experience were not the source of our belief in testimony, it may still be the measure by which to regulate the degree of confidence that we ought to repose in it. The faith may come from one quarter; and yet the test by which to

compute the extent of that faith, or the amount of credit due in particular instances, may come from another. We may or we may not be born with a precipitate tendency to believe in the testimony of our fellow-men—and yet if it be found in experience, that testimony in certain given circumstances had deceived us at the rate of once in ten times—it is precisely at that rate that we should deduct from our confidence in the testimony offered in these circumstances; and our doing so would meet the approval of every enlightened understanding. So that whatever experience Mr. Hume can allege against the testimony which has been given for the miracles of Christianity, whether it relates to the characteristics of the testimony or to its subject-matter—the improbability grounded on such experience will have all to be grappled with—an improbability, we fear, which cannot be neutralized, and far less answered, by any metaphysical statement respecting the principle of our belief, on the question which of them is original and which of them is but derived and secondary in the constitution of human nature.

6. And thirdly, this assertion of our faith in testimony being an original and distinct principle from the faith of experience, so far from clearing the question or advancing it towards a settlement, seems but to make it more puzzling and inextricable than before. Dr. Campbell charges Mr. Hume, when the latter alleges experience in opposition to testimony, with the attempt to balance things which are not homogeneous. Now it is precisely, if not homogeneous, that it seems impossible to arbitrate betwixt them. Certain it is that the rarity of an event demands a greater amount of testimony for the establishment of our conviction in its truth, and greatest of all when the event is so rare as to be miraculous. But the question what augmentation of testimony on the one hand will overcome the augmentation of improbability from a deficient experience on the other, seems of impossible solution, should these two not be homogeneous elements. If not homogeneous they are not commensurable—so that the introduction of this principle on the part of Dr. Campbell, instead of helping on the question to a deliverance, has only mystified it to our understanding, and made of it altogether a more baffling and hopeless speculation.

7. We on these grounds are not satisfied with the soundness of Dr. Campbell's refutation; and we shall attempt to substitute another. It is certainly not essential to the validity of the second, that the insufficiency of the first should be exposed—yet



both from the interest of the subject in itself, and also from our wish to deliver the argument on the side of Christianity of all that we hold to be questionable or weak, we should like to prosecute a little further our inquiry into this supposed distinction between faith in testimony and the faith of experience, and that chiefly with the view of stating our main exceptions to the reasoning of Dr. Campbell.

8. After that we have observed once or oftener the prior term of any particular sequence in nature followed up by its posterior term, it is not necessary that both should come into view on any new occasion, to make us believe that both have on that occasion actually taken place. For this purpose, it is enough that any one of the terms should be observed by us—and it is a matter of indifference which of them. If we have seen the prior term A, we conclude that it will be followed by the posterior term B, though we should not see B—or if we have seen the posterior term B, we infer that it has been preceded by the prior term A, though A in like manner has not been seen by us. For our belief in the existence of the one term, even of that which we have seen, we have had the evidence of observation. For our belief in the existence of the other, or of that which we have not seen, it would perhaps be more correct, and certainly more distinctive, to say that we have had the evidence of experience.

9. Ere proceeding further, it may be proper to remark, that it is not necessary for the two terms in question to be contiguous in the order of successive nature. The truth of the inference depends, not on the closeness, but on the certainty of the connexion between them. Between A and F there may be a train of intermediate events—yet if A always originate that train, and F be always the concluding term of it, we should, from the observation of either singly, conclude the existence of the other, with as great confidence as if they stood related in immediate succession. It is of no consequence to the argument whether F be the posterior or the postreme term to A—the posterior term of a sequence, or the postreme term of a series.

10. Now an event in nature, and the testimony which affirms it, stand related to each other precisely in this way. The one is the posterior, or, if you will, the postreme term to the other. There may be intermediate steps between the event and the testimony—its impression on the belief of the witness—its continued hold of his memory—the opportunity of narrating it to others—the circumstances which prompted him to make the

communication—and lastly, the communication itself. There is here a progression of terms, each related to the one immediately next it, in the way of antecedent and consequent; and there seems nothing in the process at all distinguishable from any other chain of sequences, when from the seen and the present, we infer the anterior and the unseen term, lying back at some distance either more or less remote in the train of causation. To infer the reality of an event from the testimony which relates it, seems in no way distinguishable from the process by which we infer the reality of some antecedent term in any other observed progression in nature, from a subsequent term now manifesting itself to the senses. It is an inference grounded on our past observation of the conjunction between the event and the testimony. Or, in other words, the evidence of testimony seems resolvable into that of experience.

11. Now this is not the opinion of Dr. Campbell; nor of any, we believe, who have taken part with him in the controversy against Mr. Hume. He holds the evidence of testimony to be distinct from that of experience, and resolvable into a separate and original principle of its own. It serves unnecessarily to complicate a subject, when first principles are multiplied without cause. But, when to serve a cause, that which is pronounced upon as a first principle, is far from being obviously so; it goes to mystify a subject, and to weaken exceedingly the impression of the argument which is founded thereupon.

12. The reason which Dr. Campbell alleges for faith in testimony being an instinctive and original principle, and not derived from any other, is, that it is strongest in infancy, and that it becomes weaker as we advance to manhood and old age. He would hold it therefore to be apart from the faith of experience—seeing that experience does not strengthen, but rather weaken our faith in testimony. It is our diffidence rather than our confidence in testimony which seems to be the result of experience. And, on the unsuspecting trust and simplicity of childhood, contrasted with the growing jealousy and slowness of belief, which are characteristic of those who have had many years of experience and been much conversant with the world—would he ground the conclusion, that our faith in testimony is one of the primary and independent principles of our nature.

13. We have already said, that even though this were conceded to Dr. Campbell, it is by no means sure that it ought to be regarded as of any service in his argument. Though we

should grant that it was not experience which originated our credit in testimony, yet from his own account, it would appear, that experience limited the degree of credit which was due to it. Faith in testimony would seem, by his own account, to operate as a blind and undiscerning instinct which led, in the first instance, astray, till rectified by a subsequent experience. If it be the office of experience to regulate and restrain the headlong tendencies of the original instinct, Dr. Campbell will not deny that this is her rightful office; and that, on the whole, she discharges it rightly. This is very like bringing the decisions of our intuitive faith in testimony to the test of experience; or making experience the arbiter of when we ought and when we ought not to repose our confidence in the testimony of others. At this rate, experience, if not the originator, is at least the corrector of our belief in testimony; and, after all, supplies the rule or the measure by which we ascertain the degree of credit that is due to it. This would leave Hume's argument, such as it is, as much or as little in possession of the ground as before; and, we fear, that this assertion of our faith in testimony, as a separate and original principle of man's constitution, has in no way helped, but on the contrary injured the cause.\*

13. But let us try to ascertain what this argument of Dr. Campbell amounts to. There is really nothing in that diffidence of the veracity of others which he has noticed, that is at all inconsistent with its derivation from experience. The child who has observed once the conjunction between an event and

\* It seems to have been a very general faith of our Scottish philosophers, that belief in testimony is an independent principle of our nature. The following passage, not to instance other authors, occurs in the writings of Dr. Adam Smith:—"There seems to be in young children an instinctive disposition to believe whatever they are told. Nature seems to have judged it necessary for their preservation that they should, for some time at least, put implicit confidence in those to whom the care of their childhood, and of the earliest and most necessary part of their education, is intrusted. Their credulity, accordingly, is excessive, and it requires long and much experience, of the falsehood of mankind, to reduce them to a reasonable degree of diffidence and distrust. In grown-up people, the degrees of credulity are, no doubt, very different. The wisest and most experienced are generally the least credulous. But the man scarce lives who is not more credulous than he ought to be, and who does not, upon many occasions, give credit to tales which not only turn out to be perfectly false, but which a very moderate degree of reflection and attention might have taught him could not well be true. The natural disposition is always to believe. It is acquired wisdom and experience only that teach incredulity, and they very seldom teach it enough. The wisest and most cautious of us all, frequently gives credit to stories which he himself is afterwards both ashamed and astonished that he could possibly think of believing."—Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, vol. ii. p. 363, eleventh edition. See also Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, chap. vi. sect. 24.



the testimony which relates it, is in the same circumstances, with regard to this sequence, as the child who has observed once the conjunction between a stroke on the table with his spoon and the noise that proceeds from it. In the latter case, it will anticipate a repetition of the noise from any stroke upon any substance ; and in the former case, it will infer the truth of an event from any testimony of any witness. The confidence, in both instances, is alike strong and alike indiscriminating ; and, in both instances, is checked and limited in the very same way. So long as the child continues to strike on the table, or on any sonorous substance whatever, it will experience the wonted noise. So long as it hears the testimony of a sincere witness, it will experience in the corresponding fact the truth of his attestation. But, at this stage, it will expect a noise from all sorts of substances ; and at this stage, too, it will count on the truth of all sorts of testimony. The whole amount of the matter is, that it has not yet learned to sort and to discriminate—and the precise office of experience is to enable it to do so. This is all the amount of the growing diffidence which Dr. Campbell speaks of. In the one case, the child has experienced that all impulsion will not be followed up by noise. In the other case, it has experienced that all testimony has not been preceded by the reality of that which the testimony affirms. There is a growing diffidence in the truth of testimony, just as there is a growing diffidence in the effect of impulsion. This phenomenon is realized in the one process which is by all allowed to be strictly experimental ; and there is therefore nothing in this same phenomenon that bespeaks the other process not to have been strictly experimental also.

14. Let us now attend more narrowly to what the diffidence in both cases precisely is. The child has struck its spoon upon the table, and elicited a noise ; and it expects to elicit the same noise by a stroke on all sorts of substances. It tries to obtain it, by a like application of the instrument in its hand on other smooth surfaces, and is disappointed—as on the surface of water, on the surface of the sandy beach, or on the surface of the bed upon which it happens to be seated. There is a growing diffidence as to the effect of impulsion, in the general. There is a check upon the largeness and universality of this expectation. And with just as good reason as Dr. Campbell affirms that experience begets a growing diffidence in the evidence of testimony, may it be said, that experience begets a growing diffidence in the evi-

dence of experience. The truth is, that experience does not appear, either to augment or diminish our *general* faith in the constancy of nature's sequences—though it may either augment or diminish our expectation of a given result in particular cases. The reason of this we have already endeavoured to make plain. We are born with the tendency to expect similar results in similar circumstances. But there is often an apparent without a real similarity, or a similarity in some circumstances though not a similarity in all, and these perhaps the essential circumstances. It is just because, at the outset of observation, we overlook the differences, and are more impressed by the similarities of things, that in virtue of our native instinct we expect the same result in cases which have an apparent sameness, though they be really distinct from each other. The diffidence in question arises from nothing else than the correction which is subsequently laid on the indefiniteness and generality of this expectation. Experience, whose proper office is, not to instruct us in the constancy of nature's sequences, but to inform us what the sequences actually are, enables us at length to discriminate between those antecedents which have but a seeming and those which have an actual identity with each other. It teaches us, not to confound the things which differ—nor to expect that what we have found in one case, we shall always find in another though an apparently similar case. It is in virtue of the infantine tendency to confound and to assimilate the things which be distinct, that a child looks in the first instance for the same noise from the carpet that it had from the table—and it is the office of experience to limit and restrain this indefinite expectation. In regard to all those substances on which it made the trial and met with disappointment, experience begets a diffidence where before there was a confidence. But, in regard to the material on which it made its first experiment, it retains unabated confidence—or rather a confidence which grows and strengthens with every repetition of the experiment.\* The child has lost the indiscriminate confidence which it had at the outset of its experimental career—just because

\* This growing confidence does not mark any increase in our expectation of a similar result from similar circumstances—for this expectation seems as strong in infancy as in manhood. It only marks an increasing assurance on our part of the circumstances in question being really as well as apparently the same. A thousand possibilities can be imagined which might have affected the sonorousness of wood, such as its temperature, the state of the atmosphere, and many other things which we need not specify. Every new experience of the wonted noise from a stroke assures us the more, that the result is not liable to be disturbed by the complication of any new or unobserved antecedents.—See the preceding Chapter.

experience has taught it to discriminate. It loses the *a priori* confidence wherewith, at one time, it would have expected a noise in striking on wood or paper or the loose earth beneath its feet—but it does not lose its confident expectation of a noise by impulsion on the table, or, to speak more correctly, by impulsion upon wood. Experience teaches to distinguish the things which be distinct—and thus while it nullifies one set of expectations, it fortifies and builds up another set.\*

15. And it is just this, and nothing else, which takes place in testimony. The growing diffidence of a child, in the general power of testimony to indicate truth, is, in every respect, the same with its growing diffidence in the general power of impulsion to effect a noise. Having once experienced testimony to be true, it expects it to be true in all time coming—as, having once elicited a noise from a stroke, it expects a noise from a stroke in all time coming. The first individual of whose testimony it had the observation, one may conceive to be actuated by the high principle of never deceiving a child; and the experience of his truth will be as uniform as the experience of a noise by impulsion on a table. But the second individual may occasionally amuse himself with practising on the credulity of children—and in his testimony, that expectation of truth which was quite general and unexcepted at the first, will meet with disappointment. This is the whole amount of that diffidence in testimony which has been noticed by Dr. Campbell. There is a growing diffidence as to the truth of testimony in the gross—but no such growing diffidence as to the truth of particular species of testimony. The child learns to discriminate between A who

\* The following is an extract from Dugald Stewart, in whose faintest hints there may so often be detected the germinating principles of a solid and profound yet withal cautious philosophy.—“It has been remarked by some eminent writers in this part of the island that our expectation of the continuance of the laws of nature has a very close affinity to our faith in human testimony. The parallel might perhaps be carried, without any over-refinement, a little farther than these writers have attempted; inasmuch as, in both cases, the instinctive principle is in the first case unlimited, and requires, for its correction and regulation, the lessons of subsequent experience. As the credulity of children is originally without bounds, and is afterwards gradually checked by the examples which they occasionally meet with of human falsehood, so, in the infancy of our knowledge, whatever objects or events present to our senses a strong resemblance to each other, dispose us, without any very accurate examination of the minute details by which they may be really discriminated, to conclude with eagerness, that the experiments and observations which we make with respect to one individual, may be safely extended to the whole class. It is experience alone that teaches us caution in such inferences, and subjects the natural principle to the discipline prescribed by the rules of induction.”



never deceives, and B who does so occasionally ; just as it learns to discriminate between the table that never misgives its noisy response to the stroke of a spoon, and the sand that never yields it. Experience has taught him a growing diffidence in the testimony of B—but so far from being its proper and exclusive office to beget a diffidence in testimony, the very same experience also teaches him a growing confidence in the testimony of A.

16. But the little learner will not only be taught by experience to discriminate between man and man—he will learn by experience to discriminate between the characteristics in general of a true, and that of a false testimony. Just as he is taught by experience to expect a noise, not from the individual table only, but from everything of the same material—so will he be tutored by experience to expect truth, not from the individual alone who never deceived him, but from every individual bearing the same marks of veracity. In the school of experience he will be exercised, and make daily progress in the recognition of these marks, and become more intelligent as he advances to manhood in the natural signs of honesty, the manner and the tone, and the whole expression of moral earnestness. He will learn to read the veracity of a witness in the air, and the distinctness, and the simplicity, and withal the circumstantial nature of his testimony. He will come to know how to derive a further confirmation from the state and circumstances of the reporter, from the condition of life he occupies, and which may be such as makes him peculiarly alive to a sense of honour, from the utter absence of every inducement that could lead him to falsify, and from direct knowledge or information of the character that he bears, and of the high-toned principle by which he is actuated. Experience may lead our young disciple to be diffident of some testimony, but not of this testimony—of the testimony that is accompanied by an opposite set of characteristics, but not of the testimony whose characteristics we have now enumerated, and which are specifically distinct from the other. He learns to expect truth or the want of it in man, from the marks of character which are presented to him, just as he learns to expect sonorousness or the want of it in body from the materials which are presented to him. It makes no difference to our argument between the two cases, that the one subject is greatly more complex than the other, or that a greater number of particulars must be considered ere we ascertain the truthfulness of an individual man than are necessary to be considered

ere we ascertain the sonorousness of an individual body. There are antecedents and consequents in both processes; and the connexion between them is not the less real, that in the one process the term which is presented to view is more difficult to be estimated than in the other process. The inference in both cases is alike experimental, notwithstanding. In looking to the material subject, we infer a sonorousness on the observation of certain marks wherewith this quality has, in all past experience, stood associated. In looking to the moral subject, we infer a truthfulness on the observation of certain marks wherewith this quality has, in all past experience, stood associated. In the cases where we do not meet with these marks, we have learned by experience to be diffident of testimony. But in the cases where we do meet with these marks, we have learned, at the very same school, even the school of experience, to be confident in testimony. When Dr. Campbell says that experience teaches us to be diffident of testimony, we reply, that this wholly depends on the marks or characters wherewith this testimony is associated. The same experience which teaches us to be diffident of the testimony that presents to notice the usual marks of falsehood, teaches us to be confident in the testimony that presents to notice the usual marks of truth. Dr. Campbell affirms in the general, that experience begets a diffidence in testimony; we reply, not in all testimony—or, when it is testimony associated with the usual concomitants of truth, not in such testimony.

17. It is thus that in opposition to Dr. Campbell it may be contended, that our faith in testimony does not rest on any principle different from our experience of its truth. If we have found that in all past cases a certain mode of relating an event stands conjoined, as the posterior term, with the reality of the event itself as the prior term, it is on this finding, and for aught we can see, on this alone, that we, in all time coming, ground our belief of any event, when related in the same mode, and amid the same circumstances. The diffidence which Dr. Campbell speaks of, only applies to the testimony which is delivered in a different way and under different circumstances. He has used the term "testimony" in its generality, when he should have distinguished between one mode of testimony and another—the one bearing those distinct and specific marks which we have experienced to be indicative of truth, the other bearing its own peculiar and distinct marks also, which are specifically diverse

from the former, and which we have experienced to be indicative of falsehood. The same experience which begets a diffidence in the latter testimony, begets a confidence in the former; and we see in this department the working of the same uniform principle which obtains in all other departments of observation. It is just the principle which leads us to look for the same result in the same circumstances, and for different results in different circumstances. The same experience which leads us to count on the sonorousness of wood, one sort of matter, and the insonorousness of sand, another sort of matter, leads us to count on the truth of one sort of testimony and the falsehood of another sort of testimony. Dr. Campbell, by making our faith in testimony a distinct principle in our intellectual constitution from our faith in experience, hath mystified his argument, and so far weakened it. In testimony, as in everything else, there is a diffidence in cases of an observed disjunction between the report and the event, and a confidence in the opposite cases of an observed conjunction—just as there is a diffidence in cases of an observed disjunction between a stroke and a noise, and a confidence in the opposite cases of an observed conjunction. The conjunction may, either in the one department or the other, be so unexcepted, as to advance the confidence into a certainty—a certainty different in kind as relating to different objects, the moral or the physical, but a certainty equal in degree, and alike based upon the evidence of observation in both.

18. But even should, notwithstanding all that we have said, should Campbell's instinctive faith in testimony be sustained, this will not embarrass or impair our argument. It is not because it would prejudice any refutation of ours that we desire to set it aside—but because we hold ourselves to be independent of its aid. We do not think that the imagination of such an instinct helps; but neither do we think, that if admitted, it hinders the cause. Although there were a peculiar mental instinct in our constitution, by which we felt and estimated the force of testimony, this does not hinder that, over and above, there may be a superiority of experimental evidence in its favour. This last is what we attempt to demonstrate—and that, too, even in the case of miracles, where Mr. Hume alleges the superiority of the experience against the testimony to be quite overwhelming. It is on this, and without having recourse to any peculiar instinct, that we would rest the strength of our argument. We think that our refutation has at least a greater obviousness to



recommend it than that of Dr. Campbell; and on the other hand, should his be sustained by any as a valid refutation, this does not stand in the way of ours, but only affords two solutions instead of one for the difficulty in question. Yet for our own part we cannot help the impression of a cause being injured by an obscure argument, even though, otherwise, it should be strongly and abundantly propped by such arguments as are distinct and obvious to every understanding. And we do think that the allegation of a peculiar instinct for testimony has wrought this very mischief in the controversy which now engages us—it being, in the first place, not very obvious in itself, and secondly, though admitted as to its existence, furnishing no certain data by which to estimate the argumentative strength which should be assigned to it—so that an experimental refutation seems still to be called for.

19. Certain it is, that in all arguments the unnecessary multiplication of first principles ought to be avoided. This has more than once been resorted to for the defence of religion—but not, we fear, without giving to its enemies the impression of a desperate cause. When Hume alleged our want of experience in the making of worlds, and would have built his Atheism on the assertion that the world was a singular effect, this was met by Reid and Stewart with their counter-affirmation, that the argument for design, as indicated by the beneficial adaptations which our universe exhibits, was not grounded on experience at all—but that this design could be read immediately by the mind, through a distinct faculty of prompt and peculiar discernment which they were pleased to ascribe to it.\* And in like manner, when the same infidel philosopher alleged our want of experience for miracles, and would have built his Deism on the assertion that our variable and defective experience for the truth of testimony could never so outweigh our uniform experience against the truth of miracles, as to make it possible that the credit of such extraordinary events should ever be established by the report of our fellow-men—this was met by Dr. Campbell with the assertion of an evidence in testimony apart from experience and independent of experience. It was certainly a signal honour done to the intellectual tactics of Mr. Hume, that for the pro-

\* Perhaps it is the same cause in both instances—the rapidity of the mind's most familiar and more especially its inferential processes, which has led Reid and Stewart to the imagination of a peculiar instinct being concerned in our reasonings upon design, and Dr Campbell to the like imagination of a peculiar mental instinct in our reasonings upon testimony.

tection of our cause, two new principles had to be invented wherewith to complicate still more the philosophy of our mental constitution. Yet without such device, we think that in both instances the mischief of his argument might be neutralized—and that without the allegation of any mystic or peculiar tact whatever, both our belief of contrivance in nature, and our belief of miracles from testimony, might be made to rest on an experimental basis.

SECTION II.—*On the Power of the Evidence of Testimony.*

1. MR. HUME's affirmation is that we have never experienced a violation of the laws of nature, but that we have often experienced the falsehood of testimony; and the argument which he grounds upon this affirmation is, that it is not in the power of testimony to establish the truth of such a violation—for this would be making the weaker experience prevail over the stronger, that which is unstable and uncertain prevail over that which is constant and immutable. To meet this, Dr. Campbell asserts that our faith in testimony is a distinct principle from our faith in experience—that the two are not of the same species; and, therefore, cannot be compared together, as things which are the same in kind, but different in degree; or that the one does not stand to the other in the relation of a whole to its part, and so, greater than its part—that, generically diverse, they, in fact, are independent and incommensurable—a supposition which, if true, might nullify the argument of Hume, yet mystify the whole subject, by leaving us in the dark, as to the relative value of two elements now made so utterly disparate, and incapable of being referred to a common standard of measurement. It is already understood that we decline all participation in this principle of Dr. Campbell; and are willing to forego any benefit which may be imagined to have come by it to the controversy. We are willing to join issue on the assumption that our faith in testimony resolves itself into our faith in experience—and whereas, in opposition to this, it has been argued by Dr. Campbell that experience weakens our faith in testimony instead of strengthening it; we have endeavoured to show that it only weakens our faith in one sort of testimony, while it strengthens our faith in another. In the first instance, it may look adversely to our cause that we should thus detach from it a consideration which

has long been enlisted upon its side—but the same principle which serves to neutralize the friendly argument is, we think, the most effectual wherewith to meet and to extinguish the hostile argument in this controversy. That force is not to be deprecated, either in military or intellectual tactics, which overthrows the adversary, even though, to make room for it, an impotent auxiliary must be displaced from the field.

2. We think, then, that both the combatants have erred, by ascribing to testimony in the *general*, what should only have been ascribed to a certain sort of testimony, and which is in no way ascribable to a certain other sort of it. The diffidence of testimony which Campbell affirms that experience teaches us, he leaves the reader to understand, as being a diffidence of all testimony, whereas, experience teaches us to distrust that testimony only which is presented to our notice with the usual characteristics of falsehood; and, on the other hand, to confide in the testimony which is presented to our notice with the reverse characteristics of truth. But Mr. Hume equally misses the same important distinction, when he affirms, that our experience in the truth of testimony is not so uniform as our experience in the constancy of nature. We would reply, of *what testimony* is it that our experience in its truth is not so uniform? We allow the assertion in regard to that testimony which bears upon it the marks of imposture. We further allow it of the testimony which, without any glaring marks of imposture, may have the gainly and prepossessing appearance of truth without its reality. But we cannot allow it of all testimony. We affirm that a testimony is conceivable—nay, that a testimony has often been given, having such marks and characteristics of truth accumulated upon it, and in such circumstances of unlikelihood or moral impossibility of its falsehood, that we can aver with the utmost confidence of such testimony, that it never has deceived us and never will. What Mr. Hume charges testimony in the *general* with, is very often realized in one species of testimony—not so often in a second—less frequently in a third—much seldomer in a fourth—with the exceeding rarity of an occurrence quite marvellous in a fifth—and never in a sixth species of testimony. The subtle error of Mr. Hume's sophistry lies in this, that he makes all testimony responsible for all the instances of falsehood—whereas he should make each species responsible only for its own instances. This needs well to be pondered—for it is really here that the whole plausibility of his argument lies. The



sophistry retains its force, so long as we look to testimony in the gross—divide the testimony into its kinds, and the sophistry is dissipated.

3. In estimating the credit of a narration, our confidence in the things which are testified is according to the kind of testimony. It makes no deduction from this confidence, to be told that testimony has often deceived us. We reply, has this kind of testimony deceived us? It were thought a strange procedure in ordinary life, to lay upon one man of strict and undeviating honesty any portion of the discredit which is attached to another man who is habitually an impostor, or who has been detected even in one instance of fraud or falsehood. It were equally strange to lay upon testimony, marked throughout by all the characters and accompanied with all the pledges of integrity, the burden of that distrust which belongs to testimony, of specifically distinct, nay opposite characteristics. To recur to an illustration already given, from tide-gauges constructed on different principles, and so differing in their results, those of one species being more and of another less correct in their indications of high and low water. That tide-gauges in general have deceived us, is surely no good reason why we should suspect the intimations of that sort of tide-gauge which never deceived us. It were not very discriminating to accumulate the burden of all the discredit which attaches to the worst kinds of the instrument, and lay it on the best kind of instrument—to collect into one sum the failures of the one which has been found erroneous once in ten times, and of the other which has been found erroneous once in twenty times, and of the other which has been so found once in fifty times, and of the other once in a hundred—and, to make this sum go in deduction from the credit of that instrument which has never been found erroneous at all. This were most irrational with the testimony of these mechanical; and it were just equally irrational with the testimony of moral instruments. It is, however, the very irrationality into which Mr. Hume has fallen. He charges the general testimony of human witnesses with falsehood; and he makes this charge adhere to all and to every sort of testimony. He holds it enough to set aside the credibility of reputed miracles, that we never experienced miracles to be true; but that we have often experienced testimony to be false. We ask, did he ever experience *this sort* of testimony to be false? He tells us that we are never deceived by trusting to the constancy of nature;

but that testimony often deceives us. We ask, did *such* testimony ever deceive us? The way in which we would meet the general charge of Mr. Hume against testimony, is, by the separation of testimony into its kinds, and making each kind responsible for itself. Each kind has its own special prognostics; and, as in all other cases of experience, each has its own corresponding result. It were strange to anticipate, from testimony having one set of prognostics, the result which belongs to testimony having another set of prognostics. But this is just what Mr. Hume has done. He lays on the kind of testimony which is quite unexpected, the burden of the exceptions that belong to other and inferior kinds of testimony. He infers, that because certain species of testimony have deceived us—this species, the purest and the highest, may deceive us also. He does not sink the highest to the discredit of the lowest; but he at least lays upon it a deduction equal in amount to an average taken from all sorts and all instances of testimony. He would lay upon the testimony that never once misgave, the guilt and the suspicion of all the misgivings that ever took place in testimony—and, because he is able to plead the constancy of nature, against the deceit or the uncertainty that belongs to certain classes of testimony—he thinks that he might plead it against that class of testimony whose truth is unfaltering as are the ordinances of nature, as constant and immutable as any of her laws.

4. We hold, that the very principle which serves to rectify the one combatant, serves also to refute the other. Indeed, we should not, perhaps, have insisted at such length on the rectification of an error in Campbell, had it not been to familiarize ourselves with the very same reasoning, which best prepares us for the refutation of his adversary. Had Dr. Campbell separated testimony into its different species, he would not have come forth with an assertion of such sweeping generality, as that experience begets a diffidence in testimony—or, at least, he would have recognised a kind of testimony, our faith in which is strengthened by every day's experience. Had Mr. Hume made the same separation, he would not have come forth with the alike general assertion, that our experience of the constancy of nature was stronger than our experience of the truth of testimony—or, at least, he would have recognised a certain kind of testimony, that as certainly indicated the event which it related as any one term of an established sequence indicates the other term. He had no more right to make the deceitfulness of certain sorts of testimony

bring a doubtfulness on others, than he has to make the insonorousness of certain material surfaces the ground of a suspicion that certain other surfaces, which had never failed to emit a sound on being struck, might nevertheless fail on the next experiment being tried with them. It were a strange inference, that because we expect no sonorousness from sand, which experience now tells us has not the property—therefore, we must not have the same confident experience as before in the sonorousness of wood, which all experience tells us has the property. But it is not more strange thus to apply the experience which we have had upon one surface of matter to all surfaces, than to apply the experience we have had of one species of testimony to all the species. We recognise a wooden surface, and can distinguish it from one of sand before that we have struck upon it; and have just the same ground, from experience, for anticipating a noise from the one as for having no such expectation from the other. We recognise an honest testimony and can distinguish it from a suspicious one, without our immediate perception of the events that are related by them; and have the very same ground, from experience, for being sure of the one event and doubtful of the other. All surfaces have a common resemblance, in that they are surfaces—yet one may be so unlike to another as to present a wholly distinct antecedent, and so give birth to a wholly distinct consequent. All testimonies bear a common resemblance, in that they are testimonies—yet one may be so unlike to another as to present the distinct term of a wholly distinct sequence, and so to warrant a different, nay an opposite inference in regard to the other term. While Mr. Hume has professed to deify experience, he has been mainly inattentive to her lessons—confounding the trains which she presents, though she presents them as wholly unlike to each other; losing sight, because of one general term that is expressive, no doubt, of a general similarity, of the specific dissimilarities that are included in it; and treating the whole matter so indiscriminately, as to look for one and the same consequent from different antecedents, or as to infer one and the same antecedent from different consequents.

5. Both in structure and in complexion, one sort of testimony may differ as much from another sort, as one material substance differs in structure and complexion from another material substance. Of the substances, each gives its own distinct evolutions; and of the two testimonies each is attended with its own distinct result. We never think, because of the want of sonor-



ousness in one sort of substance, to lessen our confidence in the sonorousness of another sort of substance, which we have always found to possess this property. And neither ought the falsehood of one sort of testimony to lessen our confidence in the truth of another sort of testimony which we have always found to be true. But not so with Mr. Hume. He makes the falsehood of the first operate, in the way of deduction, from our confidence in the second—just as if the experienced insonorousness of earth, should make us less sure than before of the always experienced sonorousness of wood or of metal. In the generic resemblance of things, he overlooks the specific distinction which there is between them—and tries to confound or to hide the distinction under the generality of a common name.

6. By this habit of confounding the things which are generically alike, however specifically different, we should traverse all the lessons of experience. The thing is imaginable, that there should be twelve species of birds, each having its own appropriate colour, and each its own special and appropriate note. If we only knew of an individual, belonging to some one or other of the species, that generally, it was a bird, but knew not to what species it belonged, we should be far from certainty in regard to the specific kind of note that was emitted by it—and it would be at the hazard of twelve to one against the assertion, if we venture to affirm which of the twelve notes it was. But suppose that we were made further to know, not alone of the bird generally, but of its specific colour, this would advance our knowledge of the note which it gave forth to absolute certainty. After ascertaining it to be white, or green, or yellow, we should be at no loss for the corresponding note to each or any colour—and that, on the basis of our past experience, from which we learned what the certain colour and certain note were, which stood invariably related to each other. But were Mr. Hume's argument on testimony consistently followed out, our uncertainty and diffidence in regard to the note would still adhere to us, even after the colour had been ascertained. On being told generally that a certain note had proceeded from a bird, he would blend all the specific varieties into one under this general appellation of the creature—and, overlooking the consideration, that to the particular colour which had been certified and made known to him, there belonged a particular note, he would still hesitate and be uncertain, because of the experience that other notes had proceeded from the genus. The proper reply is—But

did not this note, and no other, always proceed from the species?—and the reply is equally a proper and effective one by which to upset his argument respecting testimony. We might imagine, too, twelve distinct species comprehended under the generic term “testimony”—from that kind of it which, by all experience, is characteristic of habitual falsehood, to that kind of it which, by all experience also, is characteristic of scrupulous and unswerving honesty. It should not shake our confidence in the indications given forth by the last, that we had experienced something different from truth or opposite to truth in other sorts of testimony, which gave forth other indications. It is quite enough that we never experienced aught but truth in this sort of testimony—and we are not to lay upon it the servitude of all the falsehood that has ever been detected in other sorts of it. The question, Did we ever experience any other than a certain specific note from such a coloured bird? is in no way a more competent question—than, Did we ever experience any other than truth in such a coloured or in such a circumstanced testimony? The moral certainty, in the one case, is just as great as the physical certainty in the other. The two certainties relate to different objects, and so may be said to be of different kinds—but they are of equal degree in both.

7. Give me an individual with all the indications, both in his manner and conduct, of perfect moral honesty; let me recognise, whether in his oral or written testimony, a directness, and a simplicity, and a high tone of virtuousness, and withal a consistent while minutely circumstantial narrative, which all experience declares to be the signs and the characteristics of an upright testimony; let me understand that he forfeited every interest which is dear to nature, the countenance of friends, the affection of relatives, the comfort and security of home, the blessings of domestic society, the distinctions as well as the pleasures of affluence, and lastly, the enjoyment of life itself, in a resolute adherence to the avowals which he made, and which had brought upon him such a weight of persecution and odium; let me plainly see that there is nothing in the whole exhibition which can either mark the falsehood of imposture or the frenzy of enthusiasm; let me know the subject-matter of his attestation to be some palpable fact, addressed to senses which could not be deceived, because, instead of a momentary glare, there was daily and repeated converse with a visible thing, and where both the sight and the touch lent to each other a mutual con-

firmation; let me further make the supposition that the statement in question was the resurrection of one from the dead, and who had been seen to expire by thousands of assembled witnesses. —If it be objected that the truth of such a fact would imply a phenomenon wholly unexampled in the history of the species, our reply is, that the falsehood of such a testimony would imply a phenomenon equally unexampled in the history of the species —if it be said that we have no experience of such an event turning out to be real, it may be said as truly, that we have no experience of such an averment turning out to be fallacious; and the one singularity, if it do not overmatch the other, will at least neutralize it. There is nothing in the occasional falsehood of other and inferior grades of testimony, which can inflict discredit or disparagement upon this. It stands aloof from all the suspicion which attaches to these, because exempted from all those similarities which make it questionable like these. The renovation of a lifeless corpse that had been laid in the tomb, but emerged from it again in the full possession of wonted activity and consciousness, is said to be a miracle—but equal, at least would be the miracle of either a falsehood or an error in him who, throughout the whole of a life devoted to the highest objects of philanthropy, made constant assertion of his having seen and handled and companied with the risen man—who maintained this testimony amid the terrors and the pains of martyrdom—and in the words of such an exclamation as “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” breathed it out as the last and the dying utterance of his faith.

8. In the course of our reading on this controversy, we have met with no work which contains a full development of our argument, or where the author kept a steady hold of it in the course of his reasoning. Yet it is but fair to mention, that it must, in various degrees of dimness or of distinctness, have been present to the minds of several of the writers. The principle has been slightly noticed, but not insisted on, like a germ that did not germinate. It is well that it has ever come, though but momentarily, into their view—for this may be held as their recognition of its soundness, although, as if without an adequate sense of its importance and power, they have only bestowed on it a passing notice, instead of expanding it into a distinct and formal refutation.

8. The following are a few instances—Le Bas, in his review of Penrose, presents us with the following abstract of an argu-



ment by the latter against what he terms Hume's "wretched fallacy." "The *general* improbability of miracles is undoubtedly very great; but this improbability, great as it is, can never accumulate to a certainty that all miracles are without exception false. The *general* probability that human testimony should be faithful and trustworthy may perhaps be slight (or at least it may be allowed to be so for the purposes of this argument)—but this probability is capable, under some circumstances, of being converted into a moral certainty that in a particular instance the testimony is true. To argue from the general improbability of any class of occurrences to the universal certainty of their falsehood is manifestly illegitimate. But there is nothing illogical in proceeding, even from a considerable probability of their falsehood in ordinary cases, to a positive certainty of their truth in extraordinary ones. We have here a distinction of immense importance. It looks very plausible to say that miracles are highly improbable, while the deceitfulness of human testimony is notorious; and on the strength of this vague and general comparison to reject all accounts of preternatural agency. But the above considerations effectually unmuffle this egregious sophism. They enable us to see that there may be cases in which even the miracle is not improbable, and in which the testimony is absolutely conclusive."

9. Dr. John Cook, in his treatise on the Books of the New Testament—a work throughout of strenuous elaboration, has in the following sentence made a good beginning towards the refutation of Hume on the ground of experience: "Every man's testimony is to be tried by the peculiar circumstances in which it has been given, and not by the truth or falsehood which other men in different circumstances may have uttered." This should have made him independent of that instinctive propensity which Dr. Campbell ascribes to the human understanding—instead of which, he has recourse to it in the argument, and makes our belief in testimony an ultimate law of thought, and distinct from experience. Both Penrose and he had hold of the principle which might have availed them for the vindication of testimony as an experimental evidence—a principle which the former announces with greater distinctness in the quotation that follows, than in the one that has been already given from him. "Because there have been many false pretensions to miracles, this authorizes a summary rejection of all such made in like circumstances, while we retain our confidence in those made in wholly dissimilar circumstances."

10. But nowhere have we met with a more distinct announcement of the true principle on this subject, than in the brief sentence by Dr. Whately, taken from his masterly treatise on Logic—"It would be absurd to consider merely the *average chances* for the truth of *testimony in the abstract*, without inquiring *what* the testimony is, in the instance before us."

11. The reasoning of Mr. Hume may be cast into the following syllogism. Testimony has deceived us, but Nature is never known to have done so by the violation of her constancy: But these violations of Nature's constancy termed miracles are only reported to us by testimony: Therefore these events never known to have happened, as being deposed to by an evidence that has often deceived us, must be rejected as untrue.—The fallacy of this syllogism is akin to that which is termed by logicians the fallacy of composition—the middle term being used in the one premise distributively, and in the other collectively. In the above syllogism the middle term, or testimony, is used collectively in one of the premises and distributively in another. It is true that testimony has deceived us—but this ought not to have been charged collectively upon all testimony; and it is also true that miracles, especially the miracles of the gospel, are reported to us by testimony, but if by a sort of testimony which never has deceived us, this at least countervails, if it do not overmatch, the improbability which attaches to the event in question because of its miraculous character. In this section of our argument we may be said to have but neutralized the hostile argument of Mr. Hume. In the following section we shall attempt to establish something more than a counterpoise. We shall attempt to establish a preponderance.

12. After what has been advanced, we regard it as unnecessary to advert to the views of Dr. Price, who shares in the general sentiment of the philosophers of his period, in making our faith in testimony distinct from the faith of experience.

### SECTION III.—*On the Power even of a single Testimony to accredit improbable or singular Events.*

1. We hold ourselves to have abundantly proved, that even a single testimony may be of force, to countervail the improbability which is grounded on the singularity of the event that it records. In opposition to the statement, that no experience has furnished another instance of such an event being true, we might

be able to affirm that no experience has furnished another instance of such a testimony being false. We can establish in this way, at least an equipoise, between the unlikelihood of a marvellous occurrence being real, and the unlikelihood of its supporting testimony being deceitful. But we require more than an equipoise between the event and its testimony. We require an overpassing force on the part of the latter, ere we reach the length of a positive evidence in behalf of the former. Now we believe that such an overpassing force may often belong to a single testimony—or, more properly perhaps, to the testimony of a single witness. Not that we need to avail ourselves of this consideration, in demonstrating the historic truth of the Christian miracles. The great strength, as we afterwards hope to prove, of the argument for them—lies in the combination and multitude of testimonies. Still, it is an interesting inquiry, in how far a separate testimony, or rather a separate witness may suffice for establishing the truth of a miracle. We shall therefore bestow some consideration upon this—not so much because of its being a curious speculation in itself, but because of certain analogies which it suggests between the evidence of testimony and the evidence of the senses in relation to miracles, and which serve for the further enforcement and illustration of our general argument.

2. To illustrate then this evidence of testimony by the evidence of the senses—a man, by a single act of perception, may be convinced of the truth of an event wholly unexampled in history, or of the reality of an object wholly unexampled in nature. Let him be consciously awake and in possession of his right senses—and his eye will give him the authoritative intimation of everything within the range of his vision, however anomalous or unprecedented the thing may be—an information on which he will place instant and implicit reliance. Should there be a low-water at the regular time of high-water, one glance at the shore would convince him of its reality. This breach of the customary successions of nature would be verified to him by a single look—nor is it difficult to explain why, on the principles of experience, he should have full confidence in the truth of what is seen by him. The number of times in which, to his observation, a regular tide never has misgiven, is but an insignificant fraction when compared with the number of times in which his eye never has deceived him. If he have taken note of a high and low water a thousand times in his life, he has taken note of the eyes' informations and of their correctness at least a million times. This



organ is not only his instrument of observation for the alternations of the sea—but an instrument of observation for all the visible phenomena that have ever come within the reach of his notice. He is verifying its informations every minute of his waking history. He does not confine it to any one phenomenon, but is ever gathering new confidence in its accuracy, exercising it as he does on thousands of phenomena. An anomaly in regard to some one phenomenon might prove an exception to some regularity that has been observed by us hundreds of times before—yet if this anomaly have been seen by us, it is instantly and firmly believed notwithstanding—else we behoved to admit the still more violent and incredible anomaly of deceitful intimation by the eye, or an exception to a regularity that may have been observed many thousands of times before. It is like a tide-gauge that never failed in giving correct intimation; and so had an equal claim to be trusted for its accuracy, as the phenomenon of which it gave the intimation had to be expected for its regularity. Should the same tide-gauge be applied to other measurements besides—should we have observed the unfailing correctness wherewith it indicates the level of fluids ten times oftener than we have observed the regular variations of level in the waters of the ocean—then the strength of our belief in the testimony of the instrument should more than countervail, it should ten times overpass the strength of our expectation in that regularity which we suppose to have been violated.

3. Now what is true of the testimony of a material instrument may be alike true of the testimony of many a moral instrument. In our daily converse with society, we may be called upon to have greatly more frequent observation of human testimony than of many a distinct class of phenomena in the territory of nature. We may have much oftener observed that sequence by which the reality of an event stands related to a faithful testimony than we have observed the sequence which relates a high-water to a certain position of the moon in the heavens—and, on the ground of this arithmetical superiority, we may be justified in believing the one witness who depones to the reverse phenomenon of a low-water when there should have been a high. It is true that we are independent of this point—nor need we labour to establish it. It is not for the mere purpose of vindicating the actual historical evidence for the miracles of Christianity, that we thus insist on the power of one single and unsupported testimony. But it goes to complete and the more to accredit our theory, when we can

demonstrate it to be in unison with the felt and undoubted phenomena of human belief. And we must often have been sensible of the unhesitating belief that we give even to an account of one witness though he should depone to matters altogether unexpected and altogether new, different from or opposite to all former experience. Often on the single word of one whom we knew to be an honest man, we should believe in any fact or object however special that he might tell us of—as of the tide that rises to the height of fifty feet in one part of the world, or of the wind that blows from the same quarter all the year round in another part, or of stones that have fallen from upper regions of the atmosphere, or of results however unexpected in the processes of science—as when the strange and before unheard or unseen evolution of some one experiment is implicitly believed on the faith of but one testimony.

4. The same reason, then, which justifies our belief in the violation of a wonted sequence on the faith of one observation, may justify our belief in that violation on the faith of one testimony. The number of times in which we have experienced such a particular sequence may be greatly overpassed by the number of times in which we have experienced the unfailing truth either of such an observation in the one case, or of such a testimony in the other. And it serves still further to establish our vindication of the evidence of testimony, when it is considered that we do it on the same principle by which we would vindicate the evidence of the senses. The truth is, that instances can be alleged of one of our senses having deceived us, as well as of the testimony of others having deceived us. There can be alleged cases of false perception as well as of false testimony—and were Mr. Hume's argument consistently carried out, it might as well be contended that we should not believe a miracle though we saw it, as that we should not believe a miracle however it may be reported to us. It might be said in the one case as in the other, that we have had no experience of miracles, but we have had experience of the senses being imposed upon. Our reply is the same to both. Testimony may have misled you—but did ever *such* testimony? Perception, too, may have deluded you, but did ever *such* perception? You may have had experience a hundred times that such a sequence never once misgave. But you may have had the experience a thousand times that such an observation or such a testimony never did mislead you. In this case, and without having recourse to the supposition of there be-

ing any particular species of evidence, either in the senses or in testimony, we, on experimental ground alone, obtain an overpassing evidence from both.

5. But we are yet far from having made an adequate representation of the multiple force that lies in the evidence of the senses—and from which we might still further illustrate the power that belongs to one testimony, or that belongs at least to the testimony of one witness. When by one look we observe an object which surprises us by its rarity, there may be a momentary suspicion on our part of the accuracy of our own perceptions, and we look again. We must all be conscious how soon it is that we can satisfy ourselves in this way—and with what rapidity, in fact, the evidence accumulates by this repetition of notices, so as at length to become quite overpowering. The truth is, that if one such look never deceived us above once in a thousand times, it carries in it the evidence of a thousand to one in favour of what is perceived by it; and the concurrent evidence of two such looks, equal to the product of both, amounts to no less than a million to one. In like manner the evidence of three distinct looks is justly represented by the enormous proportion of a thousand millions to one, so that it is not to be marvelled at, if in a portion of time almost imperceptible we attain to absolute certainty regarding the reality of any object, however anomalous or unexpected that object may be. La Place, in his treatise on the doctrine of probabilities, admits this power of the senses to ascertain the truth even of events the most violently improbable. He puts the case of a hundred dice being thrown into the air, and of their all falling on the same faces. "If we had ourselves," he says, "been spectators of such an event, we would not believe our own eyes, till we had scrupulously examined all the circumstances, and assured ourselves that there was no trick nor deception. After such an examination, we would not hesitate to admit it notwithstanding its great improbability."\* Yet La Place, while he thus admits that the

\* The following is the translation of a passage from La Place's *Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités*, p. 15. Paris, 1814.

"We should not give credit to the testimony of a man who affirmed that he had seen a hundred dice thrown in the air, and that they all fell on the same faces. If we ourselves had been spectators of this event we should not have believed our own eyes, till, after having scrupulously examined all the circumstances, we had assured ourselves of there being no deception. But after this examination we should not hesitate to admit it, in spite of its extreme improbability, and no one would try to explain it by having recourse to the idea of an illusion produced through a reversion of the laws of vision. We ought to conclude that



evidence of the senses may be enhanced to a degree that is quite overbearing, would set aside, summarily and at once, the evidence of testimony, without considering whether that evidence too might not be enhanced in the very same way. He, in the instance now adduced, vindicates, and aright too, the authority of the senses, but without inquiring whether he might not just so vindicate the authority of testimony. His reply, and it is a sound one, to the observation, that we have been deceived by the report of our own senses, would have been, that we never are deceived by the kind of report now given. He has not chosen to investigate, whether a like reply might not be made to the observation that we have been deceived by the report of other men, which is never by such a report as that wherein I am now resting my faith in some extraordinary event. But they are not the enemies of religion alone who have been insensible to the force of

the probability of the constancy of the laws of nature is superior to the improbability of the event in question having taken place—a probability which should carry it over that of the best-attested historical facts. We may judge from this of the immense weight of testimony necessary to establish a suspension of the natural laws; and what an abuse it were to apply here the ordinary rules of criticism. All those who, without this immense amount of testimony, rest what they advance on the recital of events contrary to these laws, weaken rather than augment that confidence which they seek to inspire—for such recitals make all the more probable the mistake or imposture of their authors. But that which lessens the belief of the enlightened, often confirms the faith of the vulgar; and we have already given the reason of this.

“There are some things so extraordinary that nothing can balance the improbability of them. But this, in virtue of a reigning opinion, can be weakened down to the point of appearing inferior to the probability of the supporting testimonies; and when this opinion undergoes a change, an absurd recital, admitted unanimously in the age which gave it birth, offers to succeeding ages but a new proof of the extreme influence of general opinion even on minds of the highest order.”

The attentive reader will not fail to remark a certain perverse dexterity, by which, in comparing the evidence of testimony with the evidence of the senses, La Place gives to the latter the benefit of that constancy which obtains in the laws of nature—while he keeps out of view that the former also has its nature, and its laws, and their constancy. He is right in the extraordinary case which he has specified, in not believing his own eyes till he has made a further and careful examination of the report which they have brought to him. But he is not right in not believing testimony at all hazards, and without bestowing on it too in any instance when it depones to an event as extraordinary the same careful examination. Though sight has sometimes deceived me, did ever such a sight deceive me?—is not a more competent question, than Though testimony has often deceived me, did ever such a testimony? In passing from perception to testimony, La Place makes a strange transmutation between the medium of proof and the thing to be proved, and so pronounces against the latter evidence and in favour of the former; but by a sort of reverse treatment, which of course lands him in a conclusion the reverse of what it ought to be. In estimating the evidence of perception, he attaches the consideration of nature's constancy to the medium of proof, and withholds it from the thing to be proved—and thus makes the certainty of the proof prevail over the improbability, however violent, of the thing to be proved. In estimating the evi-

such an application. It has been missed by its ablest defenders. For example, this matter, as far as the evidence of the senses is concerned, has been exceedingly well argued by Mr. Somerville,\* in his acute and enlightened remarks on the Edinburgh review of La Place's book. The author had only to extend a similar remark to testimony, and then he might have felt himself quite independent of the supposition that our faith in it was a peculiar instinct of the understanding. The truth of perception, in fact, and the truth of testimony, might both be advocated on the same grounds. It must be admitted that the senses have sometimes deceived us, but did ever the senses tried and exercised in this particular manner deceive us? And it must be admitted that testimony has often deceived us, but did ever testimony given in such a style and under such circumstances, or so thoroughly sifted and examined as this has been—did ever such

dence of testimony, he shifts the ground, or gratuitously attaches the consideration of nature's constancy to the thing to be proved, and withholds it from the medium of proof—and thus assigns to the thing to be proved an impossibility so absolute, that no proof from testimony, however strong, can possibly establish it. Why did he not recollect his own admission that the laws of the mental have as great a uniformity as those of the material world?—and if the study of these laws enables us to distinguish between the cases of true and false perception, it also enables us to distinguish between the cases of true and false testimony.

\* We cannot too highly appreciate the merit of the contribution which this most respectable Scottish clergyman, the minister of a remote and retired country parish, has made to the Christian argument. The following extract will serve as a specimen of his able pamphlet, entitled, "Remarks on an article in the 'Edinburgh Review,' in which the Doctrine of Hume on Miracles is maintained." It was first published in 1815. The article referred to is a review of La Place's Essay.

"I shall now examine the reason which he (La Place) assigns why we would believe our own eyes in case of our seeing a hundred dice fall on the same faces, or a stone suspended in the air. It is, says he, our belief of the immutability of the laws of vision.

"This, like the former, is mere assertion, without an attempt towards proof; and, like the former, it must also be referred to general opinion. The question is, why do we believe, in such a wonderful instance, that our eyes have not deceived us? that we do not see *deuces* on the dice when they are really aces? La Place says, because we are persuaded of the immutability of the laws of vision. But the fact is, we are persuaded of no such matter, for we know that in many instances a man sees a single object as double; and in many cases, as of drunkenness or disease, he believes that he sees objects which have no existence at all. In any particular instance, therefore, whether common or extraordinary, a man believes his eyes, because he is convinced by a rapid, and perhaps unobserved process of reasoning that the general laws of vision have not, in that particular instance, been changed or suspended. The process of reasoning on which he arrives at that conclusion is that on all other objects with which he has been long acquainted, his eyes are doing their office truly as usual. He looks up to the sky, and sees not two suns but one; and he observes all the people who were about him, not having two heads, or four eyes, but the usual number. Finding his eyes testifying truly in all these matters, he believes that they are doing the same, in the case of the dice or the stone. All this, like many other processes of reasoning, may be so rapid as to



testimony deceive us? Had there been aught in the sophistry of Hume, it would have disparaged the evidence of the senses as well as that of testimony. But both admit of being alike vindicated, and that by means of one and the same argument.

6. It is possible that in a fit of insanity my imagination may prevail over my senses; but if now in the cool and conscious possession of all my faculties, such an exception is not applicable to the instance on hand. Or it is possible that by one rapid glance at an object, I may be thrown into a momentary delusion respecting it; but if it present the same aspect, after I have rubbed mine eyes, or tried them well on other familiar and well-known objects, and then looked again and again at the object in question, all suspicion is rightfully done away, and a fixed well-warranted certainty succeeds in its room. It is thus that the intimations, even of one sense, may be abundantly confirmed by a repetition of trials and exercises upon itself. Or additionally to this, the intimations of one sense may be verified by the concurrent intimations of another. If, after all, for example, there should be still a lingering scepticism in the mind, the evidence of touch may be superadded to that of sight—and both senses may concur in deponing, that the appearance in question is indeed a substantial and not a spectral one. A prodigious augmentation might thus accrue to the evidence upon the whole. The truth is, if it be but once in a million of times, that such a sight as I have now gotten, when taken singly, has ever been

be unobserved; but that this is really the ground of belief, and the process by which a person arrives at it, will appear evident from this circumstance—that if any doubt were formally to arise in his own mind, or to be suggested by another, this is the very plan he would have recourse to in order to be sure what was the fact. He would not rest on the general ground, that any change in the laws of vision was impossible; but, knowing that such changes are not only possible but frequent, he would proceed to try his eyes upon other objects, or to examine the objects in question by his other senses, that he might know whether or not any such change had taken place in the laws of vision in the present instance. The credit, therefore, which we give to our own eyes, when we see any wonderful appearance, is not founded on our persuasion of the immutability of the laws of vision, but on this, that in that instance we have abundant proof that the laws of vision are not changed."

We willingly accept the premises both of Hume and the Edinburgh reviewer, the latter of whom affirms, "that testimony itself derives all its force from experience seems very certain." We cannot agree with him, however, when he tells us that—"The first author, we believe, who stated fairly the connexion between the evidence of testimony and the evidence of experience was Hume, in his *Essay on Miracles*, a work full of deep thought and enlarged views; and, if we do not stretch the principle so far as to interfere with the truths of religion, abounding in maxims of great use in the conduct of life, as well as in the speculations of philosophy"—still less can we agree with him in the assertion respecting certain facts which he specifies, "that their improbability is so strong, that no testimony can prevail against it."



deceived ; and if it be also once in a million of times, that such a touch as I have now had, when taken singly, has ever been deceived—there is the enormous probability of a million of million of times on the side of that compound evidence which is founded on the agreement of both taken together. In all these ways, it will be observed, that one may have the utmost confidence in the reality of events, however unexpected or marvellous, when thus taken cognizance of by the senses—the confidence, in fact, of absolute certainty—or the certainty of what has been termed ocular demonstration—so named, because, though different in kind, held to be equal in degree to that of mathematical demonstration.

7. It is not because that practically we stand in need of it for the Christian argument, but in justice to the philosophy of the subject that we present this analogy between the case of testimony and the case of the senses. In like manner, as there are circumstances which enhance, and that to an indefinite extent, the evidence of the senses ; so may the evidence of testimony be enhanced in the same way, and that without calling in the aid of other testimony ; for at present, though under no necessity to push the argument thus far, we are employed in demonstrating the way in which accessions may be made to the force that lies in one testimony, or rather that lies in the testimony of one witness. In like manner, then, as to verify some strange information by the eye we try the goodness of that organ upon other objects of sight—so to verify some equally strange information brought us by a fellow-man, we may try his fitness as a medium of conveyance for other informations. It is thus that if we find an unexcepted honesty and an unexcepted accuracy of remembrance in his depositions as to all other things, this fortifies our confidence in his deposition as to the thing in question. And then, when satisfied in this way that he is a faithful and competent informer, there does lie a strength in his repeated asseverations, just as when there is a consciousness of a wholesome state of the organs, strength is given to the evidence of the senses by the repeated looks that we cast on any object which may be placed before us. Every time that he testifies anew the thing at issue, he makes another draught upon his memory by which to verify the correctness of his recital, and another draught upon his moral principles that would be exposed to violence by the recital of a falsehood. If we have already demonstrated of certain testimony, that the thing which

it depones to is not more extraordinary that would be the falsehood of its own deposition, then by this one deposition an equipoise is gained between the truth of the matter in question and its falsehood. But surely the testimony gathers in strength by its being repeated and persisted in—so as to make the supposition of its truth outweigh that of its falsehood. It is always, we should imagine, reckoned a favourable circumstance, that a witness perseveres in his story—and more especially if he do so, not only when put anew to the question by others, but should he, in coming forth with it spontaneously, prove how intimately the conviction of it is blended with the whole system and habitude of his thoughts—and still more, should he, at every fresh utterance, incur a fresh danger and inconvenience, which he might easily have avoided. It is thus that through the medium of but one acquaintance, of whose soundness and integrity I have the daily and accumulating evidence, I might come to the moral certainty even of a miracle, should he thus persevere both in vouching for it by a constant testimony, and in proceeding on it by the whole habit and regulation of his life. Such a witness as this may be regarded as an organ through whom I receive the knowledge of what happens at a distance, just as a telescope or even an eye is the organ by which I become acquainted with the appearance and reality of distant objects. And, just as I gain an augmented confidence in the informations of the latter, when upon repeated trials I find the same consistent appearance of some visible phenomenon presented to my notice—so, in the repeated and consistent testimonies of the living organ, the human informer, there would seem at each time to be a new guarantee for the truth of his one averment.

8. But there is still another way in which a multiple force is given to the evidence of the senses. We have already explained how this is obtained by a number of distinct trials with the organ, as in the case of sight, by a repetition of looks, for example.\* But beside this way, a multiple force might be obtained, even at one look, by a number of distinct objects, seen at the same time, with the anomalous or extraordinary object in question; and each in perfect keeping or harmony therewith.

\* If the first look by which I have obtained my information has not deceived me more than once in a million times—and the second look be of the same kind and quality with the first, then by this simple repetition I obtain the probability of a million millions to one for the truth of the information. It is thus that by a series of looks, or which is tantamount to this, by a prolonged look I become satisfied in a time too short for being computed, that there is no deception.

This number of contemporaneous things, perceived along with some given occurrence, might overbear, with a superiority almost infinite, any improbability, founded on the rare or unprecedented nature of the occurrence itself. An anomalous low-water, for example, would accredit itself, we have already affirmed by a single look on the part of the observer—but if, in addition to this, he further, in the conscious possession of recollection and of all his faculties, recognised every well-known rock within the field of vision, that the sea, on retiring, leaves behind it, and the whole arrangement of those objects which had indelibly impressed themselves upon his remembrance—each object would be a distinct witness for him of the trueness of his perception. Even granting that he could be deceived, when observing exclusively, the now lower level of the water, he could not be deceived in his perception of the sand and the ground and the rocks, and all the familiar objects that were now uncovered by the retreat of the ocean. It would require not one only, but a multitude of depositions, the falsehood of each of which were violently improbable, to impose on a spectator thus attempting to verify the information of his own senses by an examination of each separate object on the exposed and forsaken beach. The indefinitely large product of so many probabilities would outweigh the one improbability which was opposed to them—and which lay in the mere singularity of the event. There would not be the hesitation of a single minute, in the way of a full assurance that what he saw in appearance he saw in reality—and there is not a visible phenomenon, whether on earth or in the heavens, though a violation of the undisturbed repose and stability of nature from time immemorial, that could not, on the strict principles of experimental calculation, be verified in the same way. The appearance of written characters in the sky, the arrest or retrogression of the sun, the vacillation of the moon in an unclouded atmosphere so as to alternate along a given arch like the ball of a pendulum—are not only possible to God, but may be made credible to man, with no other access to the knowledge of them than his actual senses, and no other grounds of judgment than the actual and received laws of evidence. The last phenomenon, in particular, might admit of many thousand verifications, and each of them as strong as the evidence of vision, upon each of the single objects of which the eye takes cognizance. For every vibration of the moon, there might be a corresponding vibration in the shadows which it casts of every terrestrial object. If



mistake was possible, in the direct perception of the moon in the heavens, there might be innumerable guarantees for the accuracy thereof, in the perceived oscillation of the shadows upon earth. Let the observer but take notice, that for every movement which he sees, or which he fancies to see, of the luminary above, there is a correct and corresponding movement of each shadow below—and, if conscious all the while that his senses are in a wholesome state, he, with almost the speed of lightning, will be convinced that there is no fancy or illusion in the matter. The imagination might be deceived in one thing—though that deception would be as utterly in violation of all past experience, as the reality of the phenomenon in question—but it would need the concurrence of a thousand as strong violations, or the product of a thousand as strong improbabilities to deceive us in so many things, to deceive us in regard to the oscillation of all the shadows of which distinct observation might be taken, as to deceive us in regard to the one oscillation of the moon in the firmament. To admit the reality of the phenomenon, we have only to admit one exception to all experience. To reject its reality, we must admit the concurrence of a thousand exceptions to all experience.

9. We will not contend that the testimony of a single witness admits of equal accessions to the force and intensity of its evidence, from a cause analogous to that which we have now been considering, in regard to the evidence of the senses. But surely it does give augmented weight to the testimony of a witness for some unprecedented fact or phenomenon, when all that he testifies beside is either known to be true, or is in perfect keeping and consistency with the principal deposition. We may conceive him, for example, to avouch, on the evidence of his own senses, the resurrection of one from the dead. We have already affirmed, that such may be the peculiar characteristics of this testimony, and such the peculiar circumstances in which it was delivered, as to make its falsehood, though unsupported and alone, as improbable as the event testified. And surely it does superadd weight to this solitary deposition, when the same witness deposes to other facts wherewith it harmonizes, and the truth of which we either independently know, or have the same evidence for that we have for the main fact, in the strong and unsuspecting appearances of perfect integrity on the part of the witness. For example, when the resurrection is not only deposed to, but the despair and affliction of friends at the death

and subsequent joy at the revival; the sudden enlargement of prosperity to that cause which, but for the alleged resurrection, would have been annihilated, as any other infant cause, by the destruction of its founder; the acceptance of the testimony on the part of the many to whom it was addressed; and the variety of other things which entered into the narrative, and were so bound up as it were with the principal fact, that but for its truth they could have had no historical existence whatever—these all serve as confirmations of the single testimony in question. Each separate congruity affords a distinct guarantee against the narrator having been mistaken or deceived himself; while the manner of perfect undesignedness and simplicity wherewith each is introduced, might afford a distinct evidence for his not being a deceiver. If, apart then from such confirmations, the probability that lay in the testimony was just equal to the improbability that lay in the thing testified, then, with the confirmations, the former must outweigh the latter; and though we do not ground the establishment of our cause on the force that might thus be superadded to the testimony of a single witness, we feel, that had we not attempted to make the exhibition of it that we have done, we should have been keeping back part at least of the strength of our argument.

10. This power, however, of a single testimony or of a single witness to establish the truth of a miracle, is practically, and in reference to the miracles of the New Testament, a minor consideration. For the accrediting of our religion, it is not necessary to insist upon it. But if it can be explained, and without recourse to any peculiar instinct of the understanding, it serves to give completeness and consistency to our whole speculation. It might seem to warrant the imagination of such an instinct, that, in point of fact, the belief of a miracle might be felt upon the authority even of a single informer; and that, with a certain number of credentials accumulated upon his person, the belief would be felt instantly and irreversibly. To be impressed rightly by such belief, it is not necessary that we should be able to state the grounds of it. Still, however, the explanation of the actual phenomena of belief is of itself an interesting object, when it can be accomplished. We hold that, in this instance, an account can be given of the phenomena without calling in the aid of any distinct or original principle in the constitution of the human mind—another example, out of the many, of that marvellous coincidence which obtains between the apparently intuitive

judgments of the vulgar, and the calculations of scientific men.

11. This marvellous coincidence, so well noticed by La Place in various parts of his work,\* is not only one of his most profound, but one of the most solid of those general observations in which he has indulged himself, and by which he relieves the more abstruse and scientific character both of his Analytic Theory and of his Essay on Probabilities. It is not certainly the love of the marvellous, but strict and sound philosophy, which prompted him to make the observation; and it might have led him, we think, to assign another possible reason for the faith of the vulgar, in certain miracles, at least, than the only one which he has been pleased to allege—even their love of the marvellous. Nothing can be truer than the harmony which obtains between their most rapid and confident intuitions on the one hand, and the results of strict calculation on the other. For example, what can be more prompt, and at the same time more unfailingly accurate, than their identification of a personal acquaintance—proceeding, doubtless, on the felt unlikelihood of any other person realizing the very combination of lineaments and features by which he is ascertained and distinguished from the rest of the species? Should there be only one man in a thousand who possesses a deceiving resemblance in any one individual feature to the person in question, then it is by a very high power of a thousand, by a number amounting to many millions, that a calculator of probabilities would estimate the unlikelihood of any other person uniting all the same features and same peculiarities, or by which he would estimate the chance bordering upon certainty that he was not deceived in the particular instance before him. It is by such a product, in fact, of separate unlikelihoods, that a man can identify on the instant, not merely his own friend, but his own hat, his own staff, his own umbrella. It is the number of independent characteristics which meet in any of these articles, that leads to so swift and sound a conclusion in regard to them; and precisely on the same principle, it

\* "It is this principle of Daniel Bernoulli's which makes the results of calculation to coincide with the indications of common sense, and which affords the means of appreciating with some exactness these otherwise vague indications."—*Théorie Analytique des Probabilités*, p. 440. 1812.

"We see by this essay, that the Theory of Probabilities is nothing at bottom but good sense reduced to calculation. It makes us estimate with exactness what just spirits feel by a sort of instinct, and without being able to render an account of it."—*Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités*, p. 96. 1814.



is the number of the independent characteristics of truth meeting in one testimony which gives a power of conviction to it that surmounts the most violent improbability. This surely is a possible explanation of the fact, that so many enlightened minds, on a specific examination of the actual evidence for the miracles of Christianity, have deferred to them—long before Hume framed his metaphysical argument, or La Place revived it in a mathematical form. It is well, however, that it admits both of a metaphysical and mathematical refutation—the strength of which, however, becomes more palpable, when we pass, as in the following section, from the consideration of a single testimony to that of a concurrence of testimonies.

SECTION IV.—*On the Power which lies in the Concurrence of distinct Testimonies.*

1. In throwing a pair of dice, the chance that aces shall cast up, is as one to thirty-six. There being six sides on each of the dice, the chance that an ace shall cast up with the first of them is as one to six, and with the second is also one to six: and one to thirty-six expresses the probability that both shall concur—the chance of both conditions being realized at once, being just equal to the product of the separate chances into each other.

2. It is precisely at such a rate that the probability for the falsehood of any definition decreases, or the probability for its truth increases, with the concurrence of testimonies in its favour. If one of these testimonies be of such a kind, as, taking all the ostensible circumstances together, to have proved false once in six times, this single testimony gives the probability of six to one on the side of the thing deposed to. The addition of just such another testimony would make out the probability of thirty-six, and of a third two hundred and sixteen—or the probability on the whole, arising from the testimony or the truth of any occurrence, may be represented, by the product of the separate probabilities for the truth of each individual testimony.

3. Of course, the testimonies must be supposed independent of each other. And then, we are not to wonder at the speedy and perfect assurance which, by their means, we obtain of many events, although they should have no other evidence to rest upon. Such, after all, is the majority of truth to falsehood in the world—that, on the strength even of one of its every-day testimonies,

we place implicit reliance on the truth of an event, whereof previously we had no expectation. Of how many of our familiars may it be said, that the chance is at least as a thousand to one, of his speaking truth rather than falsehood. Let two such concur, then, in any deposition—and, in as far as the probability of an event depends on the integrity of the witnesses, there are the chances of no less than a million to one in its favour. There must, then, be the inherent improbability of a million to one in the event itself, ere, with such a support from testimony, it can be dismissed as unworthy of credit. It will be seen, by what an immense superiority of evidence, on the addition of a third or a fourth or a certain number of witnesses, even this or indeed any definite improbability might be overcome—an evidence, which grows and gathers in rapid multiple progression by the addition of every new witness—provided always, that each deposes on his own independent knowledge, and that they have no collusion with one another.

4. It is thus that, had we good enough separate testimonies, we might obtain by their conjunction, an evidence in behalf of a miracle that would outweigh to any amount the improbability which is inherent in the miracle itself. It is quite true that the establishment of a miracle requires stronger testimony than an ordinary event does—yet let that stronger testimony only be multiplied as much as the weaker, and the result would be, that the miracle should not only be as credible, but indefinitely and to any extent more credible, than the ordinary event. For example, let the improbability of a miracle be estimated at a million, and attested by three witnesses for each of whose separate integrities there is the probability of a million—then from the testimony of any one of these witnesses we obtain an equivalent or equipoise to the improbability of the miracle—leaving the product of the remaining two integrities, or a million of millions, to represent the strength of our reason for believing the alleged miracle to be true. Should the ordinary event, on the other hand, have, in certain given circumstances, the improbability of a thousand attached to it, and be attested by three witnesses for each of whose integrities there is the probability of a thousand—then, as before, would the deposition of one of these witnesses neutralize the improbability of the event; but the joint testimony of the remaining two witnesses would only afford the probability of a thousand times a thousand, or of one million, to represent the strength of our reason for believing the alleged

event to be true. In other words, we should, in the respective circumstances now stated, have a million times better reason for believing in the truth of the miracle than in that of the ordinary event: Sceptics complain of the tax on their credulity, when they are called upon to put faith in miracles. Let them have a care, lest they, all the time, should, in reference to the miracles of the gospel, be resisting a claim upon their belief, many million-fold greater than is possessed even by the commonest events in the history of past ages.

5. But, to obtain the requisite strength of evidence for overcoming the native improbability of a miracle, it is not necessary that all the separate testimonies should be of the best and highest description. By one such testimony we might effect an equipoise. And by the addition of another, though of a very inferior sort, we might gain a preponderancy. One testimony of a superlative order, and whose falsehood would be miraculous, is of force enough, at least to countervail the improbability of an event whose truth would be miraculous. The superaddition of another testimony, of so low a character as to have deceived or misgiven once in six times, would of itself establish a proof of six times greater strength than the improbability that had to be overcome by it. It is thus that subsidiary, though inferior testimonies, are not without effect on the general result. They could even of themselves overbalance the unlikelihood of a miracle—and when compounded, as they are in gospel history, with so many testimonies of the highest kind, the effect exceeds all conception, if not all computation. Nothing therefore can be juster than the reflection of Dr. Paley, when, in coming to a conclusive reckoning with Mr. Hume, he practically disposes of his argument by showing how it fails in a specific case.\*

6. This deliverance of Paley proceeded from the force of the evidence being felt, not from its being calculated. For in order to be felt, and felt rightly too, or in some sort of general proportion to its strength, it is not necessary that the calculation should precede the feeling. There is nothing more familiar than the instant formation of a shrewd and unerring judgment by men who are wholly unable to state the grounds of it. With what confidence, for example, will a man identify his acquaintance among the many thousands of human beings who pass before him—yet who never has either reflected on the principles or estimated the strength of that evidence on which his determina-

\* See Chap. I. § 20.



tion proceeds. He may never have computed how indefinite is the variety of human countenances which can be formed by means of the possible changes in the combination of a few lineaments or features—and yet with what perfect accuracy as well as confidence will he recognise his own friend, or his own hat, or his own umbrella? He feels the evidence without knowing anything of its philosophical vindication. He has the sense of it, though not the science of it—and this is enough to carry him in safety through the manifold judgments he is called upon to make in the practical business of life. It is thus that an unlettered workman, incapable though he be of all nice calculation, may, in these matters, have the nicest propriety of quick and instant discernment. Whether it be the circumstantial testimony of one witness, or the multiple testimony of several, he cannot make the correct numerical estimate, but he can take on the correct impression of each new circumstance in the former case, or of each new deposition in the latter. It would not make him a better jurymen though he were tutored in the philosophy of evidence—at least, it is the common sense of a jury, and not their philosophy, which forms, in every instance when there is to be a judgment founded upon testimony, our best guarantee for the soundness of their decision. And as it is not necessary, for their coming to a right practical judgment on any given case, that they should be able to comprehend the true philosophy on the subject of testimony, as little is it necessary that they should be able to confute a false philosophy on the same subject. The true philosophy does not aid them—the false does not impede or unsettle them. They judge as they would have done although no philosophy had been raised upon the question—and it is precisely thus, that the practical and home-bred sagacity of Dr. Paley meets with the sophistry of Hume.

9. Still, it is desirable that it should be met on its own ground, and refuted in the terms of a general argument. And for this purpose we revert with all confidence to the argument which we have already employed. When Mr. Hume affirms that testimony has often deceived us, our reply is that there is a species of testimony which never deceived us—and that when a testimony of this species is associated with a miracle, then there is an evidence for its reality at least as strong as the counter-evidence which lies in the improbability of a miracle as such. After this we seek no aid, though we believe it to be had, from the principles adverted to in our last section—and by which we

endeavoured to make it apparent, that even a single testimony might more than countervail the improbability of a singular event. The vast, the indefinite superiority of the evidence over the objection may be made out in another way—by the composition of testimonies.

8. Having thus freed the argument in the abstract from the objection of Mr. Hume, we can now, with all the greater confidence, pass to the argument in the concrete, as founded on the actual state of the testimony for our religion. There, we behold an indefinitely greater strength of evidence than that afforded by the twelve men who make up the supposed case of Dr. Paley. Those ages of unquestionable martyrdom furnish us with thousands—and, in each of their dying testimonies, we behold a separate argument in favour of the Christian miracles, as strong as the objection laid to their charge, on the score of dissimilarity to all example and experience. The argument, grounded on the combination of such testimonies, exceeds all computation—and, whatever strength there may be in the consideration, that never did such an event as the resurrection of our Saviour before occur in the annals of our species, it is overpassed by the more than million-fold strength of the reply, that never did there occur in the annals of our species the falsehood of any one such testimony as that whereof we can allege the consent of many thousands to the fact in question. We have not only the countless depositions of witnesses absolutely without exception—but these multiplied in force and effectiveness times without number, by witnesses of every inferior grade beneath them—men of probity and good sense, though not signalized by martyrdom—authors who have left their written testimonies with every character both of simplicity and earnestness behind them—oral witnesses accredited by their sufferings or their readiness to suffer, and as numerous as were the individual members of all the Christian churches in the days of the apostles—the testimony of a whole nation of enemies, and that signified in a way the most expressive, even by their silence on the subject of the Christian miracles, those best vouchers for a faith which they detested—a like silence, virtually expressive of the same thing, among the hosts more numerous still of provoked and persecuting Gentiles—the utter destitution of all credible testimony or credible proof against the cause, among its adversaries—while among its friends, a multitude of distinct, and separate, and wholly independent testimonies, each followed by a track of historic evi-



dence and light that comes after it, and altogether composing a broad stream of effulgence that has borne down the gospel story on such characters of brightness as no distance of time can obscure, and as, in fact, the researches of each successive generation among the documents of antiquity only serve to irradiate the more. When Mr. Hume appeals to our experience of the falsehood of testimony, we ask, if ever on the face of the earth, there has been the experience of the falsehood of such testimony—or rather, when we think of the rapid progression by which it grows and multiplies with every new accession that is made to it, may we confidently affirm of its evidence that no anomalies in nature or history however unexampled, that no miracles however stupendous, can withstand it.

9. And Mr. Hume himself confesses of testimony that it might, in particular circumstances, have a force of evidence sufficient to overpower his own argument. He imagines a universal darkness to have lasted for some days in a bygone age, and that had been the subject of a universal and uncontradicted tradition down to the present times—that it was either incidentally noticed, or expressly deponed to by contemporary authors—that, in every newly-visited country, the same thing, handed down by transmission, remained the current and strong belief of all the inhabitants—that there was a perfect historical consistency, both in all the accounts of it at the time, and in the constant allusion made to it by succeeding authors. Mr. Hume, when *directly* judging of the event in question in the light of this evidence, even though the evidence of testimony, feels himself forced to admit the truth of it—a conclusion altogether the opposite of that to which he is led by the *reflex* cognizance which he takes of the evidence itself. He cannot resist the admission of a most stupendous miracle, when supported by evidence so strong. In a word, he defers to our own principle of the confidence due to *such* testimony; or, of not making one sort of testimony responsible for the errors or the falsities which may be detected in other and altogether distinct sorts of testimony. This he admits in one case—and it is just by specific examination that we ascertain whether it may not be applicable to other cases also. Mr. Hume, without computation, and by the dictate of an instant and intuitive sagacity, gives his consent to the truth of a miracle, on the strength of a certain imagined testimony by which he conceives it to be supported. And many a sound believer, without computation, but in virtue of the same



felt strength which lies in the real testimony for the miracles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, comes to a like firm, and, we maintain, a like warrantable conviction in their favour. We hold that, apart from computation, the belief in both instances is alike warrantable. But it is well, if the scientific or arithmetical proof can be superadded to the popular and instant persuasion—that so, the doctrine of probabilities which, in the hands of La Place, has been turned to the purposes of infidelity, might be converted into an auxiliary and voucher for the faith. It is desirable that the evidence for the miracles of the New Testament were not only felt to be overbearing, but were exhibited in calculation to be so.

10. Before taking leave of Mr. Hume, let us endeavour to point out by what dexterity it was, that he managed to construct two plausible arguments—the first on the side of Atheism, the second on the side of Deism. The reader will recollect his atheistical argument grounded on the allegation of the world being a singular effect—and that we could not, therefore, reason to its cause, as we can to the cause of any other consequent whose antecedent we had ourselves observed on some former occasion. We met that argument by the counter allegation, that though the world viewed in its totality, and as a compound aggregate, was singular, yet that it had something in common with all those productions which were the effects of a designing cause, and that in respect of that thing it had no singularity. There is the adaptation of means to *an* end in the world, as distinct and discernible as there is such adaptation in a watch—and as it is adaptation, and that alone, in the watch, which indicates the watchmaker, so it is adaptation, and that alone, in the world, from which we infer a world-maker. Now we should like to notice a kind of reverse artifice to this in the construction of his other argument. In devising the first argument, he specialized the world from all kindred phenomena, notwithstanding the common property of adaptation which it had along with them. In devising the second argument, he confounded the first and highest sort of testimony with all the sorts, notwithstanding the special property by which it stands distinguished from the rest. In the first argument, he overlooks the common property, and specializes; in the second, he overlooks the special property, and confounds. Whether it proceeded from design or the want of discrimination we know not—but when he looked to the world and pronounced it singular, he made no mention of that in the

world, which likens it to all other examples of mechanism. And when he looked to the best and highest species of testimony and pronounced it fallacious, because under the general name of testimony instances of error and falsity were comprehended, he made no mention of that in the superior which distinguished it from all the other and inferior species of testimony. In the one case, where there is a common ingredient, yet he would specialize and separate from all. In the other case, where there is a special ingredient, yet he would confound and reduce it to a state of commonness with all. He calls the world singular, when the one thing which it has in common with others, is that on which may be founded the inference of a God. He calls the Christian testimony common, when the one thing, which it has in contradistinction to many other testimonies, is that on which may be founded the inference of a revelation from God. He views the world in its singularity; and, when so doing, overlooks the common attribute which it possesses, and which constitutes the strength of the theistical argument. He views testimony in its generality; and, when so doing, overlooks the special property which it possesses, and which constitutes the strength of the Christian argument. He chooses, in the first instance, to discriminate where there is no difference, or at least no difference of argumentative effect against the existence of a God. He chooses, in the second instance, to confound where there is a difference, and a difference of the utmost argumentative effect in favour of revelation. In both he hath violated, though by cross and contradictory methods, a principle of logic—and it needs but a logical rectification to restore both to the argument for a God and to the argument for Christianity, the strength which belongs to them.\*

\* The great name of a philosopher gives a destructive fascination to any dogmata he may utter, however rash or reckless they should be; and the defenders of Christianity, therefore, cannot bear too much pains to expose their real character. After Hume, we know of none who has converted the reputation he earned in the other sciences into a more dangerous instrument of unfair and injurious offence to the science of Theology than La Place, the greatest mathematician and astronomer of the present century. In his two works on the "Doctrine of Probabilities," he makes frequent discovery of his inclination to throw discredit on the pretensions both of natural and revealed religion. For example, in speaking of events and of their necessary dependence on the laws of nature, he tells us that—"In our ignorance of those links by which they are united with the entire system of the universe, we ascribe them to *final causes* or to chance, according as they happen regularly or without apparent order; but these imaginary causes have successively given way with the limits of our knowledge, and disappear entirely before that sound philosophy which sees nothing in them but the expression of our ignorance of the true causes." They are such exhibitions of senti-

11. Hitherto both these arguments have been disposed of in a way that we deem to be unsatisfactory. Each has been met by the assertion of a distinct and original principle in our intellectual constitution that we believe had been previously unheard of—the one, an instinctive perception of design apart from experience; the other, an instinctive faith in testimony equally apart from experience. This was certainly a great homage to the ingenuity of Hume on the part of his opponents—being, in

nment as these, which convince us of the vast importance of the distinction that we make between the laws of matter and its dispositions. It seems clear from the above extract that La Place thinks the final cause for any event or class of events might be dispensed with, so soon as the discovery has been made of its efficient or physical cause. But physical causes, as we have already explained, account only for the events which take place in successive nature. They do not account for the existing relations which take place in contemporaneous nature. Now we can afford to give up the laws of matter; and rest our main argument for the being of God, in as far as it can be gathered from the external world, upon its collocations.

The above extract evinces a hostile feeling towards the religion of nature. The following, as directed against the historical evidence of Christianity, evinces a no less hostile feeling towards the religion of the Bible. "Let us suppose a fact conveyed to us through twenty witnesses—the first conveying it to the second, the second to the third, and so on. Let us also suppose that the probability in favour of each witness is equal to nine-tenths—the probability of the fact will then be less than one-eighth—that is to say, we shall have more chances than seven to one for its being false. We cannot better illustrate this diminution of probability, than by the extinction which takes place on the clearness of objects when several pieces of glass are interposed—a very small number of pieces sufficing to intercept the view of an object which a single piece would allow us to perceive in a distinct manner. Historians do not appear to have attended enough to this reduction in the probability of facts, when they are looked to across a great number of successive generations: several historical events now reported certain, would become at least doubtful if submitted to this proof."—It is thus that by the glare of false analogy, and having in it much at least of the semblance of science, the evidence for the miracles of the gospel might be represented as having undergone successive abstractions, till now attenuated to a shadow. Now, what do we find to be the true state of the matter, when we abstain from bringing the vague analogies of one science or one subject into contact with another, to which it is in no way applicable? We at this moment enjoy a much greater sufficiency and splendour of historical evidence for the narratives of the gospel than the Christian world did three hundred years ago—from the discovery since that period of innumerable documents then unknown, and from the results of that laborious investigation by which they have been made to cast the light of a constantly increasing confirmation on each other. The geologists of the present day are in infinitely better circumstances for guessing at the past history of the globe, than the geologists of five hundred years back; and that, because they know infinitely more of those fossil characters and remains, which may be regarded as so many vestiges or inscriptions by the hand of nature, and because they can now read these records of hers with a better exercised discernment than before. In like manner, the sacred eruditionists of the present day see much clearer and farther than their forefathers did into the records of Christianity: and since the invention of printing, the discoveries which are perpetually being made by them, invest the credentials of our faith with a lustre that always increases and never decays—after they have been consigned to the "immortal custody of the press."



fact, a full admission of the soundness of his reasoning on the then only existing data—that is, on all which had yet been known of the mental philosophy. Insomuch, that to stem his infidelity in both its branches, they had to discover what was before unknown ; or rather, we think, to invent or imagine what was before unthought of. We hold both the cause of Natural Theology and the cause of Christianity to be independent of any such device—and that without complicating and mystifying the science of human nature, or having recourse to questionable novelties, there might, on the ground of experimental evidence alone, be raised a defence against each of his two sophistries, more effective than any which has been hitherto attempted, and certainly far more luminous.

12. One main advantage of such a refutation as we have attempted, is, that if effective, it goes conclusively to establish the experimental character of the evidence for the truth of Christianity—the only appropriate evidence for a religion of facts. We feel anxious for the removal of all from the Christian side of the controversy, which might obliterate that character—and we did feel an obliteration, so long as no other argument could be devised, by which to meet the sophistry of Hume, but such as recognised our faith in testimony to be distinct from our faith in experience. I hold it a most important demonstration, if it have really been made out, that the historical argument for the truth of Christianity has a purely inductive basis to rest upon ; and that all the strength and glory which modern science has taken to herself, because of her firm standing on the groundwork of observation, belongs, without mixture and without attenuation, to the faith which we profess. The characteristic thing which gives such vigorous and enduring staple to the philosophy of our age, is that she now builds up all her doctrine on the findings of experience—and no longer, as before, on the fancies of a creative imagination. What we hold then a most desirable thing in argumenting the cause of Christianity, is to preserve this strictly experimental character to the reasonings on which her authority is founded—and we ever felt this subtlety of Hume, not as argued by him, but as redargued by his opponents, to be an obstacle in the way. It seemed a giving up of the authority of experience, to affirm of testimony, a character *sui generis*, and which owned no fellowship with the other—and we do feel, as if restored to comfort and to confidence, when, on the premises of our antagonist, that testimony is reducible to experience, we can never-

theless make good an overwhelming superiority of proof, for the miracles of Christ and His immediate followers. We now, in reference to our gospel and our faith, hold ourselves to be as firmly posted, as the disciples of modern science, on the evidence, the purely observational evidence of ascertained facts. It only remains to follow the investigation consistently out, from the evidence of Christianity to the substance of Christianity—and to take our lessons from the volume of revelation, just as every sound experimental philosopher takes his from the volume of nature. They hold the authority of one natural observation to be of more weight than the goodliest theory however plausible. And we, with our well-accredited record, should hold one scriptural observation taken from its pages, to be of surpassing authority and value over all gratuitous imaginations of our own. The question of sound philosophy is, What findest thou? The question of sound theology is, What readest thou? There have been repeated attempts to put these two at variance—and to oppose the lessons taken from the works, to the lessons taken from the word of God. But there is the same reigning spirit that actuates the true disciple in each of these departments, and a harmony of principle in both.

## BOOK II.

### ON THE MIRACULOUS EVIDENCE FOR THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### ON THE PRINCIPLES OF HISTORICAL EVIDENCE, AND THEIR APPLICATION TO THE QUESTION OF THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. WERE a verbal communication to come to us from a person at a distance, there are two ways in which we might try to satisfy ourselves that this was a true communication, and that there was no imposition in the affair. We might either sit in examination upon the substance of the message, and then, from what we knew of the person from whom it professed to come, judge whether it was probable that such a message would be sent by him; or we may sit in examination upon the credibility of the messengers.

2. It is evident, that in carrying on the first examination, we might be subject to very great uncertainty. The professed author of the communication in question may live at such a distance from us, that we may never have it in our power to verify his message by any personal conversation with him. We may be so far ignorant of his character and designs, as to be unqualified to judge of the kind of communication that should proceed from him. To estimate aright the probable genuineness of the message from what we know of its author, would require an acquaintance with his plans, and views, and circumstances, of which we may not be in possession. We may bring the greatest degree of sagacity to this investigation; but then the highest sagacity is of no avail, when there is an insufficiency of data.



Our ingenuity may be unbounded ; but then we may want the materials. The principle which we assume may be untrue in itself, and, therefore, may be fallacious in its application.

3. Thus we may derive very little light from our first argument. But there is still a second in reserve—the credibility of the messengers. We may be no judges of the kind of communication which is natural, or likely to proceed from a person with whom we are but imperfectly acquainted ; but we may be very competent judges of the degree of faith that is to be reposed in the bearers of that communication. We may know and appreciate the natural signs of veracity. There is a tone and a manner characteristic of honesty, which may be both intelligible and convincing. There may be a concurrence of several messengers. There may be their substantial agreement. There may be the total want of anything like concert or collusion among them. There may be their determined and unanimous perseverance, in spite of all the incredulity and all the opposition which they meet with. The subject of the communication may be most unpalatable to us ; and we may be so unreasonable as to wreak our unpleasant feelings upon the bearers of it. In this way they may not only have no earthly interest to deceive us, but have the strongest inducement possible to abstain from insisting upon that message which they were charged to deliver. Last of all, as the conclusive seal of their authenticity, they may all agree in giving us a watchword, which we previously knew could be given by none but their master ; and which none but his messengers could ever obtain the possession of. In this way, unfruitful as all our efforts may have been upon the first subject of examination, we may derive from the second the most decisive evidence that the message in question is a real message, and was actually transmitted to us by its professed author.

(4.) Now this consideration applies in all its parts to a message from God. The argument for the truth of this message resolves itself into the same two topics of examination. We may sit in judgment upon the subject of the message ; or we may sit in judgment upon the credibility of its bearers.

4. The first forms a part at least of that argument for the truth of the Christian religion, which comes under the head of its *internal evidences*. The substance of the message is neither more nor less than that particular scheme of the Divine economy which is revealed to us in the New Testament ; and the point of inquiry is, whether this scheme be consistent with that knowledge

of God and His attributes which we are previously in possession of?

5. It is doubtful to many whether any effectual argument can be founded upon this consideration, because they do not count themselves enough acquainted with the designs or character of the Being from whom the message professes to have come. Were the author of the message some distant and unknown individual of our own species, we would scarcely be entitled to found an argument upon any comparison of ours, betwixt the import of the message and the character of the individual, even though we had our general experience of human nature to help us in the speculation. Now, of the invisible God they affirm that we have no experience whatever. We are still further removed from all direct and personal observation of Him or of His counsels. Whether we think of the eternity of His government, or the mighty range of its influence over the wide departments of nature and of providence, He stands at such a distance from us, as to make the management of His empire a subject well-nigh inaccessible to all our faculties.

6. It is evident, however, that this does not apply to the second topic of examination. The bearers of the message were beings like ourselves; and we can apply our safe and certain experience of man to their conduct and their testimony. We may know too little of God to found any confident argument *a priori* upon the coincidence which we conceive to exist between the subject of the message and our previous conceptions of its author. But we may know enough of man to pronounce upon the credibility of the messengers. Had they the manner and physiognomy of honest men? Was their testimony resisted, and did they persevere in it? Had they any interest in fabricating the message; or did they suffer in consequence of this perseverance? Did they suffer to such a degree as to constitute a satisfying pledge of their integrity? Was there more than one messenger, and did they agree as to the substance of that communication which they made to the world? Did they exhibit any special mark of their office as the messengers of God; such a mark as none but God could give, and none but His approved messengers could obtain the possession of? Was this mark the power of working miracles; and were these miracles so obviously addressed to the senses as to leave no suspicion of deceit behind them? These are questions which we feel our competency to take up, and to decide upon. They lie within the legitimate boundaries of human

observation ; and upon the solution of these do we at present rest the question of the truth of the Christian religion.

7. This, then, is the state of the question with those to whom the question was originally addressed. They had personal access to the messengers ; and the evidences of their veracity lay before them. They were the eye and ear witnesses of those facts, which occurred at the commencement of the Christian religion, and upon which its credibility rests. What met their observation must have been enough to satisfy them ; but we live at the distance of nearly two thousand years, and is there enough to satisfy us ? Those facts which constitute the evidence for Christianity, might have been credible and convincing to them, if they really saw them ; but is there any way by which they can be rendered credible and convincing to us, who only read of them ? What is the expedient by which the knowledge and belief of the men of other times can be transmitted to posterity ? Can we distinguish between a corrupt and a faithful transmission ? Have we evidence before us by which we can ascertain what was the belief of those to whom the message was first communicated ? And can the belief which existed in their minds be derived to ours, by our sitting in judgment upon the reasons which produced it ?

8. The surest way in which the belief and knowledge of the men of former ages can be transmitted to their descendants, is through the medium of written testimony ; and it is fortunate for us that the records of the Christian religion are not the only historical documents which have come down to us. A great variety of information has come down to us in this way ; and a great part of that information is as firmly believed and as confidently proceeded upon, as if the thing narrated had happened within the limits of our eye-sight. No man doubts the invasion of Britain by Julius Cæsar ; and no man doubts, therefore, that a conviction of the truth of past events may be fairly produced in the mind by the instrumentality of a written memorial. This is the kind of evidence which is chiefly appealed to for the truth of ancient history ; and it is counted satisfying evidence for all that part of it which is received and depended upon.

9. In laying before the reader, then, the evidence for the truth of Christianity, we do not call his mind to any singular or unprecedented exercise of its faculties. We call him to pronounce upon the credibility of written documents, which profess to have been published at a certain age and by certain authors.



The inquiry involves in it no principle which is not appealed to every day in questions of ordinary criticism. To sit in judgment on the credibility of a written document, is a frequent and familiar exercise of the understanding with literary men. It is fortunate for the human mind, when so interesting a question as its religious faith can be placed under the tribunal of such evidence as it is competent to pronounce upon. It was fortunate for those to whom Christianity (a professed communication from heaven) was first addressed, that they could decide upon the genuineness of the communication by such familiar and every-day principles, as the marks of truth or falsehood in the human bearers of that communication. And it is fortunate for us, that when, after that communication has assumed the form of a historical document, we can pronounce upon the degree of credit which should be attached to it, by the very same exercise of mind which we so confidently engage in, when sitting in examination upon the other historical documents that have come down to us from antiquity.

10. If two historical documents possess equal degrees of evidence, they should produce equal degrees of conviction. But if the object of the one be to establish some fact connected with our religious faith, while the object of the other is to establish some fact, about which we feel no other interest than that general curiosity which is gratified by the solution of any question in literature, this difference in the object produces a difference of effect in the feelings and tendencies of the mind. It is impossible for the mind, while it inquires into the evidence of a Christian document, to abstain from all reference to the important conclusion of the inquiry. And this will necessarily mingle its influence with the arguments which engage its attention. It may be of importance to attend to the peculiar feelings which are thus given to the investigation, and in how far they have affected the impression of the Christian argument.

11. We know it to be the opinion of some, that in this way an undue advantage has been given to that argument. Instead of a pure question of truth, it has been made a question of sentiment, and the wishes of the heart have mingled with the exercises of the understanding. There is a class of men who may feel disposed to overrate its evidences, because they are anxious to give every support and stability to a system which they conceive to be most intimately connected with the dearest hopes and wishes of humanity; because their imagination is carried

away by the sublimity of its doctrines, or their heart engaged by that amiable morality which is so much calculated to improve and adorn the face of society.

12. Now, we are ready to admit, that as the object of the inquiry is not the character, but the truth of Christianity, the philosopher should be careful to protect his mind from the delusion of its charms. He should separate the exercises of the understanding from the tendencies of the fancy or of the heart. He should be prepared to follow the light of evidence, though it may lead him to conclusions the most painful and melancholy. He should train his mind to all the hardihood of abstract and unfeeling intelligence. He should give up everything to the supremacy of argument, and be able to renounce, without a sigh, all the tenderest prepossessions of infancy, the moment that truth demands of him the sacrifice. Let it be remembered, however, that while one species of prejudice operates in favour of Christianity, another prejudice operates against it. There is a class of men who are repelled from the investigation of its evidences, because in their minds Christianity is allied with the weakness of superstition; and they feel that they are descending when they bring down their attention to a subject which engrosses so much respect and admiration from the vulgar.

13. It appears to us, that the peculiar feeling which the sacredness of the subject gives to the inquirer, is, upon the whole, unfavourable to the impression of the Christian argument. Had the subject not been sacred, and had the same testimony been given to the facts that are connected with it, we are satisfied that the history of Jesus in the New Testament would have been looked upon as the best supported by evidence of any history that has come down to us. It would assist us in appreciating the evidence for the truth of the gospel history, if we could conceive for a moment that Jesus, instead of being the founder of a new religion, had been merely the founder of a new school of philosophy, and that the different histories which have come down to us had merely represented him as an extraordinary person, who had rendered himself illustrious among his countrymen by the wisdom of his sayings and the beneficence of his actions. We venture to say, that had this been the case, a tenth part of the testimony which has actually been given would have been enough to satisfy us. Had it been a question of mere erudition, where neither a predilection in favour of a religion nor an antipathy against it could have impressed a bias in any one direction,

the testimony, both in weight and in quantity, would have been looked upon as quite unexampled in the whole compass of ancient literature.

14. To form a fair estimate of the strength and decisiveness of the Christian argument, we should if possible divest ourselves of all reference to religion, and view the truth of the gospel history purely as a question of erudition. If, at the outset of the investigation, we have a prejudice against the Christian religion, the effect is obvious; and, without any refinement of explanation, we see at once how such a prejudice must dispose us to annex suspicion and distrust to the testimony of the Christian writers. But even when the prejudice is on the side of Christianity, the effect is unfavourable on a mind that is at all scrupulous about the rectitude of its opinions. In these circumstances, the mind gets suspicious of itself. It feels a predilection, and becomes apprehensive lest this predilection may have disposed it to cherish a particular conclusion, independently of the evidences by which it is supported. Were it a mere speculative question, in which the interests of man and the attachments of his heart had no share, he would feel greater confidence in the result of his investigation. But it is difficult to separate the moral impressions of piety, and it is no less difficult to calculate their precise influence on the exercises of the understanding. In the complex sentiment of attachment and conviction which he annexes to the Christian religion, he finds it difficult to say how much is due to the tendencies of the heart, and how much is due to the pure and unmingled influence of argument. His very anxiety for the truth disposes him to overrate the circumstances which give a bias to his understanding; and, through the whole process of the inquiry he feels a suspicion and an embarrassment, which he would not have felt had it been a question of ordinary erudition.

15. The same suspicion which he attaches to himself, he will be ready to attach to all whom he conceives to be in similar circumstances. Now, every author who writes in defence of Christianity is supposed to be a Christian; and this, in spite of every argument to the contrary, has the actual effect of weakening the impression of his testimony. The suspicion affects, in a more remarkable degree, the testimony of the first writers on the side of Christianity. In opposition to it, you have, no doubt, to allege the circumstances under which the testimony was given; the tone of sincerity which runs through the performance of the author; the concurrence of other testimonies; the persecutions which



were sustained in adhering to them, and which can be accounted for on no other principle than the power of conscience and conviction; and the utter impossibility of imposing a false testimony on the world, had they even been disposed to do it. Still there is a lurking suspicion, which often survives all this strength of argument, and which it is difficult to get rid of, even after it has been demonstrated to be completely unreasonable. He is a Christian. He is one of the party. Am I an infidel? I persist in distrusting the testimony. Am I a Christian? I rejoice in the strength of it; but this very joy becomes matter of suspicion to a scrupulous inquirer. He feels something more than the concurrence of his belief in the testimony of the writer. He catches the infection of his piety and his moral sentiments. In addition to the acquiescence of the understanding, there is a *con amore* feeling, both in himself and in his author, which he had rather be without, because he finds it difficult to compute the precise amount of its influence; and the consideration of this restrains him from that clear and decided conclusion, which he would infallibly have landed in, had it been purely a secular investigation.

16. There is something in the very sacredness of the subject, which intimidates the understanding, and restrains it from making the same firm and confident application of its faculties, which it would have felt itself perfectly warranted to do, had it been a question of ordinary history. Had the apostles been the disciples of some eminent philosopher, and the Fathers of the Church their immediate successors in the office of presiding over the discipline and instruction of the numerous schools which they had established, this would have given a secular complexion to the argument, which, we think, would have been more satisfying to the mind, and have impressed upon it a closer and more familiar conviction of the history in question. We should have immediately brought it into comparison with the history of other philosophers, and could not have failed to recognise that, in minuteness of information, in weight and quantity of evidence, in the concurrence of numerous and independent testimonies, and in the total absence of every circumstance that should dispose us to annex suspicion to the account which lay before us, it far surpassed any thing that had come down to us from antiquity. It so happens, however, that instead of being the history of a philosopher, it is the history of a prophet. The veneration we annex to the sacredness of such a character, mingles with our belief in the truth of

his history. From a question of simple truth it becomes a question in which the heart is interested; and the subject from that moment assumes a certain holiness and mystery, which veils the strength of the argument, and takes off from that familiar and intimate conviction which we annex to the far less authenticated histories of profane authors.

17. It may be further observed, that every part of the Christian argument has been made to undergo a most severe scrutiny. The same degree of evidence which, in questions of ordinary history, commands the easy and universal acquiescence of every inquirer, has, in the subject before us, been taken most thoroughly to pieces, and pursued, both by friends and enemies, into all its ramifications. The effect of this is unquestionable. The genuineness and authenticity of the profane historian are admitted upon much inferior evidence to what we can adduce for the different pieces which make up the New Testament. And why? Because the evidence has been hitherto thought sufficient, and the genuineness and authenticity have never been questioned. Not so with the gospel history. Though its evidence is precisely the same in kind, and vastly superior in degree, to the evidence for the history of the profane writer, its evidence has been questioned, and the very circumstance of its being questioned has annexed a suspicion to it. At all points of the question there has been a struggle and a controversy. Every ignorant objection, and every rash and petulant observation, has been taken up and been commented upon by the defenders of Christianity. There has at last been so much said about it, that a general feeling of insecurity is apt to accompany the whole investigation. There has been so much fighting, that Christianity is now looked upon as debatable ground. Other books, where the evidence is much inferior, but which have had the advantage of never being questioned, are received as of established authority. It is striking to observe the perfect confidence with which an infidel will quote a passage from an ancient historian. He perhaps does not overrate the credit due to him. But present him with a tabellated and comparative view of all the evidences that can be adduced for the Gospel of Matthew, and any profane historian whom he chooses to fix upon, and let each distinct evidence be discussed upon no other principle than the ordinary and approved principles of criticism, we assure him that the sacred history would far outweigh the profane in the number and value of its testimonies.

18. In illustration of the above remarks, we can refer to the

experience of those who have attended to this examination. We ask them to recollect the satisfaction which they felt, when they came to those parts of the examination where the argument assumes a secular complexion. Let us take the testimony of Tacitus for an example. He asserts the execution of our Saviour in the reign of Tiberius, and under the procuratorship of Pilate ; the temporary check which this gave to His religion ; its revival, and the progress it had made, not only over Judea, but to the city of Rome. Now all this is attested in the *Annals of Tacitus*. But it is also attested in a far more direct and circumstantial manner in the annals of another author, in a book entitled the "*History of the Acts of the Apostles, by the Evangelist Luke*." Both of these performances carry, on the very face of them, the appearance of unsuspicious and well-authenticated documents. But there are several circumstances in which the testimony of Luke possesses a decided advantage over the testimony of Tacitus. He was the companion of these very apostles. He was an eyewitness to many of the events recorded by him. He had the advantage over the Roman historian in time, and in place, and in personal knowledge of many of the circumstances in his history. The genuineness of his publication, too, and the time of its appearance, are far better established, and by precisely that kind of argument which is held decisive in every other question of erudition. Besides all this, we have the testimony of at least five of the Christian Fathers, all of whom had the same, or a greater advantage in point of time than Tacitus, and who had a much nearer and readier access to original sources of information. Now, how comes it that the testimony of Tacitus, a distant and later historian, should yield such delight and satisfaction to the inquirer, while all the antecedent testimony (which, by every principle of approved criticism, is much stronger than the other) should produce an impression that is comparatively languid and ineffectual ? It is owing in a great measure to the principle to which we have already alluded. There is a sacredness annexed to the subject, so long as it is under the pen of Fathers and Evangelists, and this very sacredness takes away from the freedom and confidence of the argument. The moment that it is taken up by a profane author, the spell which held the understanding in some degree of restraint is dissipated. We now tread on the more familiar ground of ordinary history ; and the evidence for the truth of the Gospel appears more assimilated to



that evidence which brings home to our conviction the particulars of the Greek and Roman story.

19. To say that Tacitus was upon this subject a disinterested historian, is not enough to explain the preference which you give to his testimony. There is no subject in which the triumph of the Christian argument is more conspicuous than the moral qualifications which give credit to the testimony of its witnesses. We have every possible evidence that there could be neither mistake nor falsehood in their testimony; a much greater quantity of evidence, indeed, than can actually be produced to establish the credibility of any other historian. Now, all we ask is, that where an exception to the veracity of any historian is removed, you restore him to that degree of credit and influence which he ought to have possessed, had no such exception been made. In no case has an exception to the credibility of an author been more triumphantly removed, than in the case of the early Christian writers; and yet, as a proof that there really exists some such delusion as we have been labouring to demonstrate, though our eyes are perfectly open to the integrity of the Christian witnesses, there is still a disposition to give the preference to the secular historian. When Tacitus is placed by the side of the Evangelist Luke, even after the decisive argument which establishes the credit of the latter historian has convinced the understanding, there remains a tendency in the mind to annex a confidence to the account of the Roman writer, which is altogether disproportioned to the relative merits of his testimony.

20. Let us suppose, for the sake of further illustration, that Tacitus had included some more particulars in his testimony, and that, in addition to the execution of our Saviour, he had asserted in round and unqualified terms that this said Christus had risen from the dead, and was seen alive by some hundreds of His acquaintances. Even this would not have silenced altogether the cavils of enemies; but it would have reclaimed many an infidel; been exulted in by many a sincere Christian; and made to occupy a foremost place in many a book upon the evidences of our religion. Are we to forget all the while that we are in actual possession of much stronger testimony? that we have the concurrence of eight or ten contemporary authors, most of whom had actually seen Christ after the great event of His resurrection? that the veracity of these authors, and the genuineness of their respective publications, are established on grounds much stronger than have ever been alleged in behalf of Tacitus, or any ancient author?

Whence this unaccountable preference of Tacitus? Upon every received principle of criticism, we are bound to annex greater confidence to the testimony of the apostles. It is vain to recur to the imputation of its being an interested testimony. This the apologists for Christianity undertake to disprove, and actually have disproved it, and that by a much greater quantity of evidence than would be held perfectly decisive in a question of common history. If, after this, there should remain any lurking sentiment of diffidence or suspicion, it is entirely resolvable into some such principle as I have already alluded to. It is to be treated as a mere feeling—a delusion which should not be admitted to have any influence on the convictions of the understanding.

21. The principle which we have been attempting to expose is found, in fact, to run through every part of the argument, and to accompany the inquirer through all the branches of the investigation. The genuineness of the different books of the New Testament forms a very important inquiry, wherein the object of the Christian apologist is to prove that they were really written by their professed authors. In proof of this, there is an uninterrupted series of testimony from the days of the apostles; and it was not to be expected that a point so esoteric to the Christian society could have attracted the attention of profane authors, till the religion of Jesus, by its progress in the world, had rendered itself conspicuous. It is not, then, till about eighty years after the publication of the different pieces, that we meet with the testimony of Celsus, an avowed enemy to Christianity, and who asserts, upon the strength of its general notoriety, that the historical parts of the New Testament were written by the disciples of our Saviour. This is very decisive evidence. But how does it happen, that it should throw a clearer gleam of light and satisfaction over the mind of the inquirer than he had yet experienced in the whole train of his investigation? Whence that disposition to underrate the antecedent testimony of the Christian writers? Talk not of theirs being an interested testimony; for, in point of fact, the same disposition operates after reason is convinced that the suspicion is totally unfounded. What we contend for is, that this indifference to the testimony of the Christian writers implies a dereliction of principles which we apply with the utmost confidence to all similar inquiries.

22. The effects of this same principle are perfectly discernible in the writings of even our most judicious apologists. We offer

no reflection against the assiduous Lardner, who, in his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, presents us with a collection of testimonies which should make every Christian proud of his religion. In his evidence for the genuineness of the different pieces which make up the New Testament, he begins with the oldest of the Fathers, some of whom were the intimate companions of the original writers. According to our view of the matter, he should have dated the commencement of his argument from a higher point, and begun with the testimonies of these original writers to one another. In the Second Epistle of Peter there is a distinct reference made to the writings of Paul, and in the Acts of the Apostles there is a reference made to one of the four Gospels. Had Peter, instead of being an apostle, ranked only with the Fathers of the Church, and had his epistle not been admitted into the canon of Scripture, this testimony of his would have had a place in the catalogue, and been counted peculiarly valuable both for its precision and its antiquity. There is certainly nothing in the estimation he enjoyed, or in the circumstances of his epistle being bound up with the other books of the New Testament, which ought to impair the credit of his testimony. But, in effect, his testimony does make a weaker impression on the mind than a similar testimony from Barnabas, or Clement, or Polycarp. It certainly ought not to do it, and there is a delusion in the preference that is thus given to the later writers. It is, in fact, another example of the principle which we have been so often insisting upon. What profane authors are in reference to Christian authors at large, the Fathers of the Church are in reference to the original writers of the New Testament. In contradiction to every approved principle, we prefer the distant and the later testimony to the testimony of writers who carry as much evidence and legitimate authority along with them, and who differ from others only in being nearer the original sources of information. We neglect and undervalue the evidence which the New Testament itself furnishes, and rest the whole of the argument upon the external and superinduced testimony of subsequent authors.

23. A great deal of all this is owing to the manner in which the defence of Christianity has been conducted by its friends and supporters. They have given too much in to the suspicions of the opposite party. They have yielded their minds to the infection of their scepticism, and maintained through the whole process a caution and a delicacy which they often carry to a



degree that is excessive, and by which, in fact, they have done injustice to their own arguments. Some of them begin with the testimony of Tacitus as a first principle, and pursue the investigation upwards—as if the evidence that we collect from the annals of the Roman historian were stronger than that of the Christian writers, who flourished nearer the scene of the investigation, and whose credibility can be established on grounds which are altogether independent of his testimony. In this way they come at last to the credibility of the New Testament writers, but by a lengthened and circuitous procedure. The reader feels as if the argument were diluted at every step in the process of derivation, and his faith in the gospel history is much weaker than his faith in histories that are far less authenticated. Bring Tacitus and the New Testament to an immediate comparison, and subject them both to the touchstone of ordinary and received principles, and it will be found that the latter leaves the former out of sight in all the marks, and characters, and evidences of an authentic history. The truth of the gospel stands on a much firmer and more independent footing than many of its defenders would dare to give us any conception of. They want that boldness of argument which the merits of the question entitle them to assume. They ought to maintain a more decided front to their adversaries, and tell them, that in the New Testament itself—in the concurrence of its numerous, and distinct, and independent authors—in the uncontradicted authority which it has maintained from the earliest times of the Church—in the total inability of the bitterest adversaries of our religion to impeach its credibility—in the genuine characters of honesty and fairness which it carries on the very face of it,—that in these, and in everything else which can give validity to the written history of past times, there is a weight and a splendour of evidence which the testimony of Tacitus cannot confirm, and which the absence of that testimony could not have diminished.

24. If it were necessary, in a court of justice, to ascertain the circumstances of a certain transaction, which happened in a particular neighbourhood, the obvious expedient would be to examine the agents and the eye-witnesses of that transaction. If six or eight concurred in giving the same testimony—if there was no appearance of collusion amongst them—if they had the manner and aspect of creditable men—above all, if this testimony were made public, and not a single individual, from the numerous spectators of the transaction alluded to, stepped forward

to falsify it, then, we apprehend, the proof would be looked upon as complete. Other witnesses might be summoned from a distance to give in their testimony, not of what they saw, but of what they heard upon the subject; but their concurrence, though a happy enough circumstance, would never be looked upon as any material addition to the evidence already brought forward. Another court of justice might be held in a distant country; and, years after the death of the original witnesses, it might have occasion to verify the same transaction, and for this purpose might call in the only evidence which it was capable of collecting—the testimony of men who lived after the transaction in question, and at a great distance from the place where it happened. There would be no hesitation, in ordinary cases, about the relative value of the two testimonies; and the records of the first court would be appealed to by posterity as by far the more valuable document, and far more decisive of the point in controversy. Now, what we complain of is, that in the instance before us this principle is reversed. The report of hearsay witnesses is held in higher estimation than the report of the original agents and spectators. The most implicit credit is given to the testimony of the distant and later historians; and the testimony of the original witnesses is received with as much distrust as if they carried the marks of villany and imposture upon their foreheads. The authenticity of the first record can be established by a much greater weight and variety of evidence than the authenticity of the second. Yet all the suspicion that we feel upon this subject annexes to the former; and the apostles and evangelists, with every evidence in their favour which it is in the power of testimony to furnish, are, in fact, degraded from the place which they ought to occupy among the accredited historians of past times.

25. The above observations may help to prepare the inquirer for forming a just and impartial estimate of the merits of the Christian testimony. His great object should be to guard against every bias of the understanding. The general idea is, that a predilection in favour of Christianity may lead him to overrate the argument. We believe that if every unfair tendency of the mind could be subjected to a rigorous computation, it would be found that the combined operation of them all has the effect of impressing a bias in a contrary direction. All we wish for is, that the arguments which are held decisive in other historical questions, should not be looked upon as nugatory when applied to the investigation of those facts which are connected with the

truth and establishment of the Christian religion; that every prepossession should be swept away, and room left for the understanding to expatiate without fear and without encumbrance.

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## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE GENUINENESS OF THE DIFFERENT BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. THERE is a confusion in the language of writers on the evidences of Christianity, in regard to the terms *genuineness* and *authenticity* and *integrity*, as applied to the books of the New Testament, which it were desirable should be rectified and adjusted. At all events, a consistent phraseology should be maintained upon these subjects. Doubtless this is an affair of definition rather than of doctrine. But it saves the misconception of doctrines, when, after that definitions are settled, they should, though not altogether invulnerable to verbal criticism, be held as settled conclusively.

2. Even Dr. Paley is not free of all ambiguity in the use of these terms. In one chapter of his *Evidences*, he evidently understands by the genuineness of any book in the New Testament, that it is the production of the author whose name it bears. In another chapter, he seems to regard this as one of the particulars belonging to the authenticity of the book, and not to its genuineness.\* It is an awkward thing that there should be any interchange of meaning between these two terms; and more especially, as some of our best authors have come forth with formal definitions of them which are contradictory to each other. Ac-

\* "Now, in treating of this part of our argument, the first, and a most material, observation upon the subject is, that such was the situation of the authors to whom the four gospels were ascribed, that, if any one of the four gospels be *genuine*, it is sufficient for our purpose. The received author of the first was an original apostle and emissary of the religion. The received author of the second was an inhabitant of Jerusalem at the time, to whose house the apostles were wont to resort, and himself an attendant upon one of the most eminent of that number. The received author of the third was a stated companion and fellow-traveller of the most active of all the teachers of the religion, and in the course of his travels frequently in the society of the original apostles. The received author of the fourth, as well as of the first, was one of these apostles."—Paley's *Evidence*, Part I. chap. viii.

In his next chapter, "Of the *Authenticity* of the Scriptures," he proceeds to state among other things, "the high probability there is that they actually come from the persons whose names they bear."



according to Dr. Hill, the authenticity of a book signifies that it is the production of its professed author; and its genuineness signifies the incorruptness of its received text. In this he is followed by Dr. John Cook, author of an inquiry published some years ago into the books of the New Testament. The English writers in general, however, notwithstanding the vacillation on this matter now instanced in Dr. Paley, understand by the genuineness of the book its being the production of the author whose name it bears, and by its authenticity the truth of its contents and informations. For example, Horne does so; and that very estimable author, Isaac Taylor, who has contributed so much of late to the illustration of the historical evidences.\*

3. This confusion in the application of the term *authentic* might be accounted for in this way: Authentic, with all the writers, is tantamount to true. But this characteristic of true-ness has been applied by them to different things. The first class, in their application of the term "authentic," meant to express that the book is true; the second class meant the same term to convey that this book contains a true history. The former had respect to the history of the book, the latter to the history in the book. The most remarkable circumstance in the history of the book is the origination of it—and, more especially, the Author who framed it; and so, then, by the term "authentic," the former would signify that the author to whom it was commonly ascribed was its real author. But the latter, looking to the history in the book, and not to the external history of the book itself, would signify by the term "authentic" that the history which it contained was a real history. On this subject we feel inclined to abandon that sense of the term in which we have been educated, and to side with the two authors whom we have last referred to; and shall henceforth employ the term "authentic," as applied to any book, not to denote that it has been ascribed to its proper author, but to denote the truth and authority of its information.

4. The term *genuineness*, then, is left to denote the former circumstance in regard to any book—that is, its being the pro-

\* Taylor, in his *Transmission of Ancient Books to Modern Times*, p. 7, says, "Satisfactory evidence in support of the first proposition (the genuineness of the books) will prove that the works in question are not *forgeries*; and of the second (their authenticity) will show that they are not *fictions*."

Both the book now quoted, and another by the same author, on *The Process of Historical Proof*, are most important accessions to the literature of the argumentative evidence for Christianity. Few writers have exhibited in such bold relief the strength and solidity of the cause.

duction of the author whose name it bears. And it will not be difficult to perceive, how the meaning of this term may be still farther extended. If the book being genuine is contrasted, as is done by Taylor, with the book being a forgery, then, doubtless, it is as much a forgery by a wrong name upon its title-page, as a letter is a forgery by a wrong name for its subscription. But there is another way in which a book may at length be transformed into a forgery. It may be mutilated or interpolated, or made to undergo so many changes, whether by additions or erasures, as virtually to be a different book from what it was when it came forth originally from the hands of its author. In both cases there is a forgery—in the first case, by means of a wrong man for the book; and in the second case, by means of a wrong book for the man. And the meaning of the word genuine has been so far extended by some, as to make it expressive of freeness from both sorts of forgery—in the first place, denoting that the supposed author of the book was the real one; and, in the second place, that the book was free of all those larger corruptions that proceed from the art and the wilfulness of man. When the meaning of the term genuineness is thus far extended, then the third and last term which we proposed to explain, that is *integrity*, denotes the freedom of the book from those smaller corruptions which accumulate in the progress of ages, by the mistake and the carelessness of transcribers.

5. After more deliberation on this matter than perhaps some may think was at all necessary, we feel disposed to settle it in this way. We would understand by the *authenticity* of the book the truth of its informations; by its *genuineness*, that it is the production of the author whose name it bears; and by its *integrity*, the incorruptness of its received copies, or the agreement in the main between the book as it exists at present, and the book as it came from the hands of its author.

6. The argument for the truth of the different facts recorded in the gospel history resolves itself into four parts. In the first, it shall be our object to prove, that the different pieces which make up the New Testament were written by the authors whose names they bear, and in the age which is commonly assigned to them. In the second, we shall exhibit the internal marks of truth and honesty which may be gathered from the compositions themselves. In the third, we shall press upon the reader the known situation and history of the authors, as satisfying proofs of the veracity with which they delivered themselves. And, in

the fourth, we shall lay before them the additional and subsequent testimonies by which the narrative of the original writers is supported.

7. In every point of the investigation, we shall meet with examples of the principle which we have already alluded to. We have said, that if two distinct inquiries be set on foot, where the object of the one is to settle some point of sacred history, and the object of the other is to settle some point of profane history, the mind acquiesces in a much smaller quantity of evidence in the latter case than it does in the former. If this be right (and to a certain degree it undoubtedly is), then it is incumbent on the defender of Christianity to bring forward a greater quantity of evidence than would be deemed sufficient in a question of common literature, and to demand the acquiescence of his reader upon the strength of this superior evidence. If it be not right beyond a certain degree, and if there be a tendency in the mind to carry it beyond that degree, then this tendency is founded upon a delusion, and it is well that the reader should be apprized of its existence, that he may protect himself from its influence. The superior quantity of evidence which we can bring forward, will in this case all go to augment the positive effect upon his convictions; and he will rejoice to perceive, that he is far safer in believing what has been handed down to him of the history of Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of His apostles, than in believing what he has never doubted—the history of Alexander, and the doctrine of Socrates. Could all the marks of veracity, and the list of subsequent testimonies, be exhibited to the eye of the reader in parallel columns, it would enable him, at one glance, to form a complete estimate. We shall have occasion to call his attention to this so often, that we may appear to many of our readers to have expatiated upon our introductory principle to a degree that is tiresome and unnecessary. We conceive, however, that it is the best and most perspicuous way of putting the argument.

8.—I. The different pieces which make up the New Testament were written by the authors whose names they bear, and at the time which is commonly assigned to them.

9. After the long slumber of the Middle Ages, the curiosity of the human mind was awakened, and felt its attention powerfully directed to those old writings which have survived the waste of so many centuries. It were a curious speculation to ascertain the precise quantity of evidence which lay in the infor-



mation of these old documents. And it may help us in our estimate, first to suppose, that in the researches of that period there was only one composition found which professed to be a narrative of past times. A number of circumstances can be assigned, which might give a certain degree of probability to the information even of this solitary and unsupported document. There is, first, the general consideration, that the principle upon which a man feels himself induced to write a true history, is of more frequent and powerful operation than the principle upon which a man feels himself induced to offer a false or a disguised representation of facts to the world. This affords a general probability on the side of the document in question being a true narrative; and there may be some particulars connected with the appearance of the performance itself, which might strengthen this probability. We may not be able to discover in the story itself any inducement which the man could have in publishing it, if it were mainly and substantially false. We might see an expression of honesty, which it is in the power of written language, as well as of spoken language to convey. We might see that there was nothing monstrous or improbable in the narrative itself. And, without enumerating every particular calculated to give it the impression of truth, we may, in the progress of our inquiries, have ascertained that copies of this manuscript were to be found in many places, and in different parts of the world, proving, by the evidence of its diffusion, the general esteem in which it was held by the readers of past ages. This gives us the testimony of these readers to the value of the performance; and, as we are supposing it a history, and not a work of imagination, it could only be valued on the principle of the information which was laid before them being true. In this way, a solitary document, transmitted to us from a remote antiquity, might gain credit in the world, though it had been lost sight of for many ages, and only brought to light by the revival of a literary spirit, which had lain dormant during a long period of history.

10. We can further suppose, that in the progress of these researches another manuscript was discovered, having the same characters, and possessing the same separate and original marks of truth with the former. If they both touched upon the same period of history, and gave testimony to the same events, it is plain that a stronger evidence for the truth of these events would be afforded than what it was in the power of either of the testi-

monies, taken separately, to supply. The separate circumstances which give a distinct credibility to each of the testimonies, are added together, and give a so much higher credibility to those points of information upon which they deliver a common testimony. This is the case when the testimonies carry in them the appearance of being independent of one another. And even when the one is derived from the other, it still affords an accession to the evidence; because the author of the subsequent testimony gives us the distinct assertion, that he believed in the truth of the original testimony.

11. The evidence may be strengthened still further by the accession of a third manuscript, and a third testimony. All the separate circumstances which confer credibility upon any one document, even though it stands alone, and unsupported by any other, combine themselves into a much stronger body of evidence when we have obtained the concurrence of several. If, even in the case of a single narrative, a probability lies on the side of its being true from the multitude and diffusion of copies, and from the air of truth and honesty discernible in the composition itself, the probability is heightened by the coincidence of several narratives, all of them possessing the same claims upon our belief. If it be improbable that one should be written for the purpose of imposing a falsehood upon the world, it is still more improbable that many should be written, all of them conspiring to the same perverse and unnatural object. No one can doubt, at least, that of the multitude of written testimonies which have come down to us, the true must greatly preponderate over the false; and that the deceitful principle, though it exists sometimes, could never operate to such an extent, as to carry any great or general imposition in the face of all the documents which are before us. The supposition must be extended much further than we have yet carried it, before we reach the degree of evidence and of testimony which, on many points of ancient history, we are at this moment in actual possession of. Many documents have been collected, professing to be written at different times, and by men of different countries. In this way, a great body of ancient literature has been formed, from which we can collect many points of evidence too tedious to enumerate. Do we find the express concurrence of several authors to the same piece of history? Do we find, what is still more impressive, events formally announced in one narrative, not told over again, but implied and proceeded upon as true in another? Do we find the

succession of history, through a series of ages, supported in a way that is natural and consistent? Do we find those compositions which profess a higher antiquity appealed to by those which profess a lower? These, and a number of other points, which meet every scholar who betakes himself to the actual investigation, give a most warm and living character of reality to the history of past times. There is a perversity of mind which may resist all this. There is no end to the fancies of scepticism. We may plead in vain the number of written testimonies, their artless coincidence, and the perfect undesignedness of manner by which they often supply the circumstances that serve both to guide and satisfy the inquirer, and to throw light and support upon one another. The infidel will still have something behind which he can intrench himself; and his last supposition, monstrous and unnatural as it is, may be, that the whole of written history is a laborious fabrication, sustained for many ages, and concurred in by many individuals, with no other purpose than to enjoy the anticipated blunders of the men of future times, whom they had combined with so much dexterity to bewilder and lead astray.

12. If it were possible to summon up to the presence of the mind the whole mass of spoken testimony, it would be found that what was false bore a very small proportion to what was true. For many obvious reasons, the proportion of the false to the true must be also small in written testimony. Yet instances of falsehood occur in both; and the actual ability to separate the false from the true in written history, proves that historical evidence has its principles and its probabilities to go upon. There may be the natural signs of dishonesty. There may be the wildness and improbability of the narrative. There may be a total want of agreement on the part of other documents. There may be the silence of every author for ages after the pretended date of the manuscript in question. There may be all these in sufficient abundance to convict the manuscript of forgery and falsehood. This has actually been done in several instances. The skill and discernment of the human mind, upon the subject of historical evidence, have been improved by the exercise. The few cases in which sentence of condemnation has been given are so many testimonies to the competency of the tribunal which has sat in judgment over them, and give a stability to their verdict, when any document is approved of. It is a peculiar subject, and the men who stand at a distance from it may multiply their sus-



picious and their scepticism at pleasure ; but no intelligent man ever entered into the details without feeling the most familiar and satisfying conviction of that credit and confidence which it is in the power of historical evidence to bestow.

13. Now, to apply this to the object of our present division, which is to ascertain the age of the document, and the person who is the author of it. There are points of information which may be collected from the performance itself. They may be found in the body of the composition, or they may be more formally announced in the title-page ; and every time that the book is referred to by its title, or the name of the author and age of the publication are announced in any other document that has come down to us, these points of information receive additional proof from the testimony of subsequent writers.

14. The New Testament is bound up in one volume, but we would be underrating its evidence if we regarded it only as one testimony, and that the truth of the facts recorded in it rested upon the testimony of one historian. It is not one publication, but a collection of several publications, which are ascribed to different authors, and made their first appearance in different parts of the world. To fix the date of their appearance, it is necessary to institute a separate inquiry for each publication ; and it is the unexcepted testimony of all subsequent writers, that two of the Gospels, and several of the Epistles, were written by the immediate disciples of our Saviour, and published in their lifetime. Celsus, an enemy of the Christian faith, refers to the affairs of Jesus, as written by His disciples. He never thinks of disputing the fact ; and from the extracts, which he makes for the purpose of criticism, there can be no doubt in the mind of the reader, that it is one or other of the four Gospels to which he refers. The single testimony of Celsus may be considered decisive of the fact, that the story of Jesus and of His life was actually written by His disciples. Celsus writes about a hundred years after the alleged time of the publication of this story ; but that it was written by the companions of this Jesus, is a fact which he never thinks of disputing. He takes it up upon the strength of its general notoriety, and the whole history of that period furnishes nothing that can attach any doubt or suspicion to this circumstance. Referring to a principle already taken notice of, had it been the history of a philosopher instead of a prophet, its authenticity would have been admitted without any formal testimony to that effect. It would have been admitted,

so to speak, upon the mere existence of the title-page, combined with this circumstance, that the whole course of history or tradition does not furnish us with a single fact leading us to believe that the correctness of this title-page was ever questioned. It would have been admitted, not because it was asserted by subsequent writers, but because they made no assertion upon the subject; because they never thought of converting it into a matter of discussion; and because their occasional references to the book in question would be looked upon as carrying in them a tacit acknowledgment that it was the very same book which it professed to be at the present day. The distinct assertion of Celsus, that the pieces in question were written by the companions of Jesus, though even at the distance of a hundred years, is an argument in favour of their authenticity which cannot be alleged for many of the most esteemed compositions of antiquity. It is the addition of a formal testimony to that kind of general evidence which is founded upon the tacit or implied concurrence of subsequent writers, and which is held to be perfectly decisive in similar cases.

15. Had the pieces which make up the New Testament been the only documents of past times, the mere existence of a pretension to such an age, and to such an author, resting on their own information, would have been sustained as a certain degree of evidence that the real age and the real author had been assigned to them. But we have the testimony of subsequent authors to the same effect; and it is to be remarked, that it is by far the most crowded, and the most closely-sustained series of testimonies of which we have any example in the whole field of ancient history. When we assigned the testimony of Celsus, it is not to be supposed that this is the very first which occurs after the days of the apostles. The blank of a hundred years betwixt the publication of the original story and the publication of Celsus, is filled up by antecedent testimonies, which, in all fairness, should be counted more decisive of the point in question. They are the testimonies of Christian writers, and in as far as a nearer opportunity of obtaining correct information is concerned, they should be held more valuable than the testimony of Celsus. These references are of three kinds:—*First*, In some cases their reference to the books of the New Testament is made in the form of an express quotation, and the author particularly named. *Secondly*, In other cases the quotation is made without reference to the particular author, and ushered in by the general words—

*“As it is written.”* And, *thirdly*, There are innumerable allusions to the different parts of the New Testament scattered over all the writings of the earlier Fathers. In this last case there is no express citation ; but we have the sentiment, the turn of expression, the very words of the New Testament, repeated so often, and by such a number of different writers, as to leave no doubt upon the mind, that they were copied from one common original, which was at that period held in high reverence and estimation. In pursuing the train of references, we do not meet with a single chasm from the days of the original writers. Not to repeat what we have already made some allusions to—the testimonies of the original writers to one another, we proceed to assert, that some of the Fathers, whose writings have come down to us, were the companions of the apostles, and are even named in the books of the New Testament. St. Clement, Bishop of Rome, is, with the concurrence of all ancient authors, the same whom Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Philippians. In his epistle to the Church of Corinth, which was written in the name of the whole church of Rome, he refers to the first epistle of Paul to the former church. “Take into your hands the epistle of the blessed Paul, the apostle.” He then makes a quotation which is to be found in Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians. Could Clement have done this to the Corinthians themselves had no such epistle been in existence? And is not this an undoubted testimony, not merely from the mouth of Clement, but on the part of the churches both of Rome and Corinth, to the authenticity of such an epistle? There are in this same epistle of Clement several quotations of the second kind, which confirm the existence of some other books of the New Testament ; and a multitude of allusions or references of the third kind, to the writings of the Evangelists, the Acts of the Apostles, and a great many of those epistles which have been admitted into the New Testament. We have similar testimonies from some more of the Fathers, who lived and conversed with Jesus Christ. Besides many references of the second and third kind, we have also other instances of the same kind of testimony which Clement gave to St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians, than which nothing can be conceived more indisputable. Ignatius, writing to the church of Ephesus, takes notice of St. Paul’s epistle to that church ; and Polycarp, an immediate disciple of the apostles, makes the same express reference to St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians, in a letter addressed to that people. In carrying



our attention down from the apostolical Fathers, we follow an uninterrupted series of testimonies to the authenticity of the canonical Scriptures. They get more numerous and circumstantial as we proceed—a thing to be expected from the progress of Christianity, and the greater multitude of writers who came forward in its defence and illustration.

16. In pursuing the series of writers from the days of the apostles down to about 150 years after the publication of the pieces which make up the New Testament, we come to Tertullian, of whom Lardner says, “that there are perhaps more and longer quotations of the small volume of the New Testament in this one Christian author, than of all the works of Cicero, though of so uncommon excellence for thought and style, in the writers of all characters for several ages.”

17. We feel ourselves exposed, in this part of our investigation, to the suspicion which adheres to every Christian testimony. We have already made some attempts to analyze that suspicion into its ingredients, and we conceive that the circumstance of the Christians being an interested party, is only one, and not perhaps the principal, of these ingredients. At all events, this may be the proper place for disposing of that one ingredient, and for offering a few general observations on the strength of the Christian testimony.

18. In estimating the value of any testimony, there are two distinct subjects of consideration; the person who gives the testimony, and the people to whom the testimony is addressed. It is quite needless to enlarge on the resources which, in the present instance, we derive from both these considerations, and how much each of them contributes to the triumph and solidity of the Christian argument. In as far as the people who give the testimony are concerned, how could they be mistaken in their account of the books of the New Testament, when some of them lived in the same age with the original writers, and were their intimate acquaintances; and when all of them had the benefit of an uncontrolled series of evidence, reaching down from the date of the earliest publications to their own times? Or how can we suspect that they falsified, when there runs through their writings the same tone of plainness and sincerity which is allowed to stamp the character of authenticity on other productions; and, above all, when, upon the strength even of heathen testimony, we conclude that many of them, by their sufferings and death, gave the highest evidence that man can give of his speaking

under the influence of a real and honest conviction? In as far as the people who received the testimony are concerned, to what other circumstances can we ascribe their concurrence, than to the truth of that testimony? In what way was it possible to deceive them upon a point of general notoriety? The books of the New Testament are referred to by the ancient Fathers as writings generally known and respected by the Christians of that period. If they were obscure writings, or had no existence at the time, how can we account for the credit and authority of those Fathers who appealed to them, and had the effrontery to insult their fellow-Christians by a falsehood so palpable and so easily detected? Allow them to be capable of this treachery, we have still to explain how the people came to be the dupes of so glaring an imposition; how they could be persuaded to give up everything for a religion whose teachers were so unprincipled as to deceive them, and so unwise as to commit themselves upon ground where it was impossible to elude discovery. Could Clement have dared to refer the people of Corinth to an epistle said to be received by themselves, and which had no existence? or could he have referred the Christians at large to writings which they never heard of? And it was not enough to maintain the semblance of truth with the people of their own party. Where were the Jews all the time? and how was it possible to escape the correction of these keen and vigilant observers? We mistake the matter much, if we think that Christianity at that time was making its insidious way in silence and in secrecy, through a listless and unconcerned public. All history gives an opposite representation. The passions and curiosity of men were quite upon the alert. The popular enthusiasm had been excited on both sides of the question. It had drawn the attention of the established authorities in different provinces of the empire, and the merits of the Christian cause had become a matter of frequent and formal discussion in courts of judicature. If, in these circumstances, the Christian writers had the hardihood to venture upon a falsehood, it would have been upon safer ground than what they actually adopted. They would never have hazarded to assert what was so open to contradiction, as the existence of books held in reverence among all the churches, and which nobody either in or out of these churches ever heard of. They would never have been so unwise as to commit in this way a cause which had not a single circumstance to recommend it but its truth and its evidences.

19. The falsehood of the Christian testimony on this point

would carry along with it a concurrence of circumstances, each of which is the strangest and most unprecedented that ever was heard of. *First*, That men, who sustained in their writings all the characters of sincerity, and many of whom submitted to martyrdom as the highest pledge of sincerity which can possibly be given, should have been capable of falsehood at all. *Second*, That this tendency to falsehood should have been exercised so unwisely, as to appear in an assertion perfectly open to detection, and which could be so readily converted to the discredit of that religion which it was the favourite ambition of their lives to promote and establish in the world. *Third*, That this testimony could have gained the concurrence of the people to whom it was addressed, and that, with their eyes perfectly open to its falsehood, they should be ready to make the sacrifice of life and of fortune in supporting it. *Fourth*, That this testimony should never have been contradicted by the Jews, and that they should have neglected so effectual an opportunity of disgracing a religion, the progress of which they contemplated with so much jealousy and alarm. Add to this, that it is not the testimony of one writer which we are making to pass through the ordeal of so many difficulties. It is the testimony of many writers who lived at different times, and in different countries, and who add the very singular circumstance of their entire agreement with one another, to the other circumstances, equally unaccountable, which we have just now enumerated. The falsehood of their united testimony is not to be conceived. It is a supposition which we are warranted to condemn, upon the strength of any one of the above improbabilities taken separately. But the fair way of estimating their effect upon the argument is to take them jointly; and, in the language of the doctrine of chances, to take the product of all the improbabilities into one another. The argument which this product furnishes for the truth of the Christian testimony, has, in strength and conclusiveness, no parallel in the whole compass of ancient literature.

20. The testimony of Celsus is looked upon as peculiarly valuable, because it is disinterested. But if this consideration gives so much weight to the testimony of Celsus, why should so much doubt and suspicion annex to the testimony of Christian writers, several of whom, before his time, have given a fuller and more express testimony to the authenticity of the Gospel? In the persecutions they sustained; in the obvious tone of sincerity and honesty which runs through their writings; in their general



agreement upon this subject; in the multitude of their followers, who never could have confided in men that ventured to commit themselves by the assertion of what was obviously and notoriously false; in the check which the vigilance both of Jews and heathens exercised over every Christian writer of that period;—in all these circumstances they give every evidence of having delivered a fair and unpolluted testimony.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### ON THE INTERNAL MARKS OF TRUTH AND HONESTY TO BE FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1.—II. WE shall now look into the New Testament itself, and endeavour to lay before the reader the internal marks of truth and honesty which are to be found in it.

2. Under this head it may be right to insist upon the minute accuracy which runs through all its allusions to the existing manners and circumstances of the times. To appreciate the force of this argument, it would be right to attend to the peculiar situation of Judea at the time of our Saviour. It was then under the dominion of the Roman Emperors, and comes frequently under the notice of the profane historians of that period. From this source we derive a great variety of information, as to the manner in which the emperors conducted the government of their different provinces; what degree of indulgence was allowed to the religious opinions of the people whom they held in subjection; in how far they were suffered to live under the administration of their own laws; the power which was vested in the presidents of provinces; and a number of other circumstances relative to the criminal and civil jurisprudence of that period. In this way, there is a great number of different points in which the historians of the New Testament can be brought into comparison with the secular historians of the age. The history of Christ and His apostles contains innumerable references to the state of public affairs. It is not the history of obscure and unnoticed individuals. They had attracted much of the public attention. They had been before the governors of the country. They had passed through the established forms of justice; and some of them underwent the trial and punishment of the times.

It is easy to perceive, then, that the New Testament writers were led to allude to a number of these circumstances in the political history and constitution of the times, which came under the cognizance of ordinary historians. This was delicate ground for an inventor to tread upon ; and particularly if he lived at an age subsequent to the time of his history. He might in this case have fabricated a tale, by confining himself to the obscure and familiar incidents of private history ; but it is only for a true and a contemporary historian to sustain a continued accuracy through his minute and numerous allusions to the public policy and government of the times.

3. Within the period of the gospel history, Judea experienced a good many vicissitudes in the state of its government. At one time it formed part of a kingdom under Herod the Great. At another, it formed part of a smaller government under Archelaus. It after this came under the direct administration of a Roman governor, which form was again interrupted for several years by the elevation of Herod Agrippa to the sovereign power as exercised by his grandfather ; and it was at last left in the form of a province, at the conclusion of the evangelical history. There were also frequent changes in the political state of the countries adjacent to Judea, and which are often alluded to in the New Testament. A caprice of the reigning emperor often gave rise to a new form of government, and a new distribution of territory. It will be readily conceived how much these perpetual fluctuations in the state of public affairs, both in Judea and its neighbourhood, must add to the power and difficulty of that ordeal to which the gospel history has been subjected.

4. On this part of the subject there is no want of witnesses with whom to confront the writers of the New Testament. In addition to the Roman writers who have touched upon the affairs of Judea, we have the benefit of a Jewish historian, who has given us a professed history of his own country. From him, as was to be expected, we have a far greater quantity of copious and detailed narrative relative to the internal affairs of Judea, to the manners of the people, and those particulars which are connected with their religious belief and ecclesiastical constitution. With many, it will be supposed to add to the value of his testimony that he was not a Christian, but that, on the other hand, we have every reason to believe him to have been a most zealous and determined enemy to the cause. It is really a most useful exercise to pursue the harmony which subsists between

the writers of the New Testament, and those Jewish and profane authors with whom we bring them into comparison. Throughout the whole examination, our attention is confined to forms of justice, succession of governors in different provinces, manners, and political institutions. We are therefore apt to forget the sacredness of the subject; and we appeal to all who have prosecuted this inquiry, if this circumstance is not favourable to their having a closer and more decided impression of the truth of the gospel history. By instituting a comparison betwixt the Evangelists and contemporary authors, and restricting our attention to those points which come under the cognizance of ordinary history, we put the apostles and evangelists on the footing of ordinary historians; and it is for those who have actually undergone the labour of this examination, to tell how much this circumstance adds to the impression of their authenticity. The mind gets emancipated from the peculiar delusion which attaches to the sacredness of the subject, and which has the undoubted effect of restraining the confidence of its inquiries. The argument assumes a secular complexion, and the writers of the New Testament are restored to that credit with which the reader delivers himself up to any other historian, who has a much less weight and quantity of historical evidence in his favour.

5. We refer those readers who wish to prosecute this inquiry to the first volume of Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospels*. We shall restrict ourselves to a few general observations on the nature and precise effect of the argument.

6. In the first place, the accuracy of the numerous allusions to the circumstances of that period which the Gospel history embraces, forms a strong corroboration of that antiquity which we have already assigned to its writers from external testimony. It amounts to a proof that it is the production of authors who lived antecedent to the destruction of Jerusalem, and consequently about the time that is ascribed to them by all the external testimony which has already been insisted upon. It is that accuracy which could only be maintained by a contemporary historian. It would be difficult, even for the author of some general speculation, not to betray his time by some occasional allusion to the ephemeral customs and institutions of the period in which he wrote. But the authors of the New Testament run a much greater risk. There are five different pieces of that collection which are purely historical, and where there is a continued reference to the characters, and politics and passing events of the



day. The destruction of Jerusalem swept away the whole fabric of Jewish polity; and it is not to be conceived that the memory of a future generation could have retained that minute, that varied, that intimate acquaintance with the statistics of a nation no longer in existence, which is evinced in every page of the evangelical writers. We find, in point of fact, that both the heathen and Christian writers of subsequent ages do often betray their ignorance of the particular customs which obtained in Judea during the time of our Saviour. And it must be esteemed a strong circumstance in favour of the antiquity of the New Testament, that on a subject in which the chances of detection are so numerous, and where we can scarcely advance a single step in the narrative without the possibility of betraying our time by some mistaken allusion, it stands distinguished from every later composition, in being able to bear the most minute and intimate comparison with the contemporary historians of that period.

7. The argument derives great additional strength from viewing the New Testament, not as one single performance, but as a collection of several performances. It is the work of no less than eight different authors, who wrote without any appearance of concert, who published in different parts of the world, and whose writings possess every evidence, both internal and external, of being independent productions. Had only one author exhibited the same minute accuracy of allusion, it would have been esteemed a very strong evidence of his antiquity. But when we see so many authors exhibiting such a well-sustained and almost unexcepted accuracy through the whole of their varied and distinct narratives, it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that they were either the eye-witnesses of their own history, or lived about the period of its accomplishment.

8. When different historians undertake the affairs of the same period, they either derive their information from one another, or proceed upon distinct and independent information of their own. Now, it is not difficult to distinguish the copyist from the original historian. There is something in the very style and manner of an original narrative which announces its pretensions. It is not possible that any one event, or any series of events, should make such a similar impression upon two witnesses as to dispose them to relate it in the same language; to describe it in the same order; to form the same estimate as to the circumstances which should be noticed as important, and those other circum-

stances which should be suppressed as immaterial. Each witness tells the thing in his own way; makes use of his own language; and brings forward circumstances which the other might omit altogether, as not essential to the purpose of his narrative. It is this agreement in the facts, with this variety in the manner of describing them, that never fails to impress upon the inquirer that additional conviction which arises from the concurrence of separate and independent testimonies. Now, this is precisely that kind of coincidence which subsists between the New Testament writers and Josephus, in their allusions to the peculiar customs and institutions of that age. Each party maintains the style of original and independent historians. The one often omits altogether, or makes only a slight and distant allusion to what occupies a prominent part in the composition of the other. There is not the slightest vestige of anything like a studied coincidence betwixt them. There is variety, but no opposition; and it says much for the authenticity of both histories, that the most scrupulous and attentive criticism can scarcely detect a single example of an apparent contradiction in the testimony of these different authors, which does not admit of a likely, or at least a plausible, reconciliation.

9. When the difference betwixt two historians is carried to the length of a contradiction, it enfeebles the credit of both their testimonies. When the agreement is carried to the length of a close and scrupulous resemblance in every particular, it destroys the credit of one of the parties as an independent historian. In the case before us, we neither perceive this difference nor this agreement. Such are the variations, that at first sight the reader is alarmed with the appearance of very serious and embarrassing difficulties. And such is the actual coincidence, that the difficulties vanish when we apply to them the labours of a profound and intelligent criticism. Had it been the object of the gospel writers to trick out a plausible imposition on the credulity of the world, they would have studied a closer resemblance to the existing authorities of that period; nor would they have laid themselves open to the superficial brilliancy of Voltaire, which dazzles every imagination, and reposed their vindication with the Lelands and Lardners of a distant posterity, whose sober erudition is so little attended to, and which so few know how to appreciate.

10. In the Gospels, we are told that Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, married his brother Philip's wife. In Josephus we have

the same story; only he gives a different name to Philip, and calls him Herod; and, what adds to the difficulty, there was a Philip of that family, whom we know not to have been the first husband of Herodias. This is at first sight a little alarming. But in the progress of our inquiries, we are given to understand from this same Josephus that there were three Herods in the same family, and therefore no improbability in there being two Philips. We also know, from the histories of that period, that it was quite common for the same individual to have two names; and this is never more necessary than when employed to distinguish brothers who have one name the same. The Herod who is called Philip is just as likely a distinction as the Simon who is called Peter, or the Saul who is called Paul. The name of the high-priest, at the time of our Saviour's crucifixion, was Caiaphas, according to the Evangelists. According to Josephus, the name of the high-priest at that period was Joseph. This would have been precisely a difficulty of the same kind, had not Josephus happened to mention that this Joseph was also called Caiaphas. Would it have been dealing fairly with the Evangelists, we ask, to have made their credibility depend upon the accidental omission of another historian? Is it consistent with any acknowledged principle of sound criticism, to bring four writers so entirely under the tribunal of Josephus, each of whom stands as firmly supported by all the evidences which can give authority to a historian; and who have greatly the advantage of him in this, that they can add the argument of their concurrence to the argument of each separate and independent testimony? It so happens, however, in the present instance, that even Jewish writers, in their narrative of the same circumstance, give the name of Philip to the first husband of Herodias. We by no means conceive that any foreign testimony was necessary for the vindication of the Evangelists. Still, however, it must go far to dissipate every suspicion of artifice in the construction of their histories. It proves that, in the confidence with which they delivered themselves up to their own information, they neglected appearance, and felt themselves independent of it. This apparent difficulty, like many others of the same kind, lands us in a stronger confirmation of the honesty of the Evangelists; and it is delightful to perceive how truth receives a fuller accession to its splendour from the attempts which are made to disgrace and to darken it.

11. On this branch of the argument, the impartial inquirer



must be struck with the little indulgence which infidels, and even Christians, have given to the evangelical writers. In other cases, when we compare the narratives of contemporary historians, it is not expected that all the circumstances alluded to by one will be taken notice of by the rest; and it often happens that an event or a custom is admitted upon the faith of a single historian; and the silence of all other writers is not suffered to attach suspicion or discredit to his testimony. It is an allowed principle, that a scrupulous resemblance betwixt two histories is very far from necessary to their being held consistent with one another. And, what is more, it sometimes happens, that with contemporary historians there may be an apparent contradiction, and the credit of both parties remains as entire and unsuspicious as before. Posterity is, in these cases, disposed to make the most liberal allowances. Instead of calling it a contradiction, they often call it a difficulty. They are sensible that in many instances a seeming variety of statement has, upon a more extensive knowledge of ancient history, admitted of a perfect reconciliation. Instead, then, of referring the difficulty in question to the inaccuracy or bad faith of any of the parties, they, with more justness and more modesty, refer it to their own ignorance, and to that obscurity which necessarily hangs over the history of every remote age. These principles are suffered to have great influence in every secular investigation; but so soon as, instead of a secular, it becomes a sacred investigation, every ordinary principle is abandoned, and the suspicion annexed to the teachers of religion is carried to the dereliction of all that candour and liberality with which every other document of antiquity is judged of and appreciated. How does it happen that the authority of Josephus should be acquiesced in as a first principle, while every step in the narrative of the Evangelists must have foreign testimony to confirm and support it? How comes it that the silence of Josephus should be construed into an impeachment of the testimony of the Evangelists, while it is never admitted for a single moment that the silence of the Evangelists can impart the slightest blemish to the testimony of Josephus? How comes it that the supposition of two Philips in one family should throw a damp of scepticism over the gospel narrative, while the only circumstance which renders that supposition necessary is the single testimony of Josephus; in which very testimony it is necessarily implied, that there are two Herods in that same family? How comes it that the Evangelists, with as much internal, and a vast

deal more of external evidence in their favour, should be made to stand before Josephus, like so many prisoners at the bar of justice? In any other case, we are convinced that this would be looked upon as *rough handling*. But we are not sorry for it. It has given more triumph and confidence to the argument. And it is no small addition to our faith, that its first teachers have survived an examination, which, in point of rigour and severity, we believe to be quite unexampled in the annals of criticism.

12. It is always looked upon as a favourable presumption, when a story is told circumstantially. The art and the safety of an impostor is to confine his narrative to generals, and not to commit himself by too minute a specification of time and place, and allusion to the manners or occurrences of the day. The more of circumstance that we introduce into a story, we multiply the chances of detection, if false; and therefore, where a great deal of circumstance is introduced, it proves, that the narrator feels the confidence of truth, and labours under no apprehension for the fate of his narrative. Even though we have it not in our power to verify the truth of a single circumstance, yet the mere property of a story being circumstantial is always felt to carry an evidence in its favour. It imparts a more familiar air of life and reality to the narrative. It is easy to believe that the groundwork of a story may be a fabrication; but it requires a more refined species of imposture than we can well conceive, to construct a harmonious and well-sustained narrative, abounding in minute and circumstantial details, which support one another, and where, with all our experience of real life, we can detect nothing misplaced, or inconsistent, or improbable.

13. To prosecute this argument in all its extent, it would be necessary to present the reader with a complete analysis or examination of the gospel history. But the most superficial observer cannot fail to perceive that it maintains, in a very high degree, the character of being a circumstantial narrative. When a miracle is recorded, we have generally the name of the town or neighbourhood where it happened; the names of the people concerned; the effect upon the hearts and convictions of the bystanders; the arguments and examinations it gave birth to; and all that minuteness of reference and description which impresses a strong character of reality upon the whole history. If we take along with us the time at which this history made its appearance, the argument becomes much stronger. It does not

merely carry a presumption in its favour, from being a circumstantial history : it carries a proof in its favour, because these circumstances were completely within the reach and examination of those to whom it was addressed. Had the Evangelists been false historians, they would not have committed themselves upon so many particulars. They would not have furnished the vigilant inquirers of that period with such an effectual instrument for bringing them into discredit with the people ; nor foolishly supplied, in every page of their narrative, so many materials for a cross-examination, which would infallibly have disgraced them.

14. Now, we of this age can institute the same cross-examination. We can compare the evangelical writers with contemporary authors, and verify a number of circumstances in the history, and government, and peculiar economy of the Jewish people. We therefore have it in our power to institute a cross-examination upon the writers of the New Testament ; and the freedom and frequency of their allusions to these circumstances supply us with ample materials for it. The fact, that they are borne out in their minute and incidental allusions by the testimony of other historians, gives a strong weight of what has been called circumstantial evidence in their favour. As a specimen of the argument, let us confine our observations to the history of our Saviour's trial, and execution, and burial. They brought Him to Pontius Pilate. We know, both from Tacitus and Josephus, that he was at that time governor of Judea. A sentence from him was necessary before they could proceed to the execution of Jesus ; and we know that the power of life and death was usually vested in the Roman governor. Our Saviour was treated with derision ; and this we know to have been a customary practice at that time previous to the execution of criminals, and during the time of it. Pilate scourged Jesus before he gave Him up to be crucified. We know, from ancient authors, that this was a very usual practice among the Romans. The account of an execution generally ran in this form : He was stripped, whipped, and beheaded, or executed. According to the Evangelists, His accusation was written on the top of the cross ; and we learn from Suetonius and others, that the crime of the person to be executed was affixed to the instrument of his punishment. According to the Evangelists, this accusation was written in three different languages ; and we know from Josephus, that it was quite common in Jerusalem to have all public advertisements



written in this manner. According to the Evangelists, Jesus had to bear His cross; and we know, from other sources of information, that this was the constant practice of these times. According to the Evangelists, the body of Jesus was given up to be buried at the request of friends. We know that unless the criminal was infamous, this was the law or custom with all Roman governors.

15. These, and a few more particulars of the same kind, occur within the compass of a single page of the evangelical history. The circumstantial manner of the history affords a presumption in its favour, antecedent to all examination into the truth of the circumstances themselves. But it makes a strong addition to the evidence when we find that in all the subordinate parts of the main story, the Evangelists maintain so great a consistency with the testimony of other authors, and with all that we can collect from other sources of information as to the manners and institutions of that period. It is difficult to conceive, in the first instance, how the inventor of a fabricated story would hazard such a number of circumstances, each of them supplying a point of comparison with other authors, and giving to the inquirer an additional chance of detecting the imposition. And it is still more difficult to believe that truth should have been so artfully blended with falsehood in the composition of this narrative, particularly as we perceive nothing like a forced introduction of any one circumstance. There appears to be nothing out of place; nothing thrust in with the view of imparting an air of probability to the history. The circumstance upon which we bring the Evangelists into comparison with profane authors, is often not intimated in a direct form, but in the form of a slight or distant allusion. There is not the most remote appearance of its being fetched or sought for. It is brought in accidentally, and flows in the most natural and undesigned manner out of the progress of the narrative.

16. The circumstance that none of the gospel writers are inconsistent with one another, falls better under a different branch of the argument. It is enough for our present purpose, that there is no single writer inconsistent with himself. It often happens that falsehood carries its own refutation along with it; and that, through the artful disguises which are employed in the construction of a fabricated story, we can often detect a flaw or a contradiction, which condemns the authority of the whole narrative. Now, every single piece of the New Testament wants this mark

or character of falsehood. The different parts are found to sustain, and harmonize, and flow out of each other. Each has at least the merit of being a consistent narrative. For anything we see upon the face of it, it may be true, and a further hearing must be given before we can be justified in rejecting it as the tale of an impostor.

17. There is another mark of falsehood which each of the gospel narratives appears to be exempted from. There is little or no parading about their own integrity. We can collect their pretensions to credit from the history itself, but we see no anxious display of these pretensions. We cannot fail to perceive the force of that argument which is derived from the publicity of the Christian miracles, and the very minute and scrupulous examination which they had to sustain from the rulers and official men of Judea. But this publicity, and these examinations, are simply recorded by the Evangelists. There is no boastful reference to these circumstances, and no ostentatious display of the advantage which they gave to the Christian argument. They bring their story forward in the shape of a direct and unencumbered narrative, and deliver themselves with that simplicity and unembarrassed confidence, which nothing but their consciousness of truth, and the perfect feeling of their own strength and consistency, can account for. They do not write as if their object was to carry a point that was at all doubtful or suspicious. It is simply to transmit to the men of other times, and of other countries, a memorial of the events which led to the establishment of the Christian religion in the world. In the prosecution of their narrative, we challenge the most refined judge of the human character, to point out a single symptom of diffidence in the truth of their own story, or of art to cloak this diffidence from the notice of the most severe and vigilant observers. The manner of the New Testament writers does not carry in it the slightest idea of its being an assumed manner. It is quite natural, quite unguarded, and free of all apprehension, that their story is to meet with any discredit or contradiction from any of those numerous readers who had it fully in their power to verify or to expose it. We see no expedient made use of to obtain or to conciliate the acquiescence of their readers. They appear to feel as if they did not need it. They deliver what they have to say, in a round and unvarnished manner; nor is it in general accompanied with any of those strong asseverations by which an impostor so often attempts to practise upon the credulity of his victims.

18. In the simple narrative of the Evangelists, they betray no feeling of wonder at the extraordinary nature of the events which they record, and no consciousness that what they are announcing is to excite any wonder among their readers. This appears to us to be a very strong circumstance. Had it been the newly broached tale of an impostor, he would, in all likelihood, have feigned astonishment himself, or at least, have laid his account with the doubt and astonishment of those to whom it was addressed. When a person tells a wonderful story to a company who are totally unacquainted with it, he must be sensible, not merely of the surprise which is excited in the minds of the hearers, but of a corresponding sympathy in his own mind with the feelings of those who listen to him. He lays his account with the wonder, if not the incredulity of his hearers; and this distinctly appears in the terms with which he delivers his story, and the manner in which he introduces it. It makes a wide difference, if, on the other hand, he tells the same story to a company who have long been apprized of the chief circumstances, but who listen to him for the mere purpose of obtaining a more distinct and particular narrative. Now, in as far as we can collect from the manner of the Evangelists, they stand in this last predicament. They do not write, as if they were imposing a novelty upon their readers. In the language of Luke, they write for the sake of giving more distinct information; and that the readers *might know the certainty of those things, wherein they had been instructed*. In the prosecution of this task, they deliver themselves with the most familiar and unembarrassed simplicity. They do not appear to anticipate the surprise of their readers, or to be at all aware, that the marvellous nature of their story is to be any obstacle to its credit or reception in the neighbourhood. At the first performance of our Saviour's miracles, there was a strong and a widely spread sensation over the whole country. *His fame went abroad, and all people were amazed*. This is quite natural; and the circumstance of no surprise being either felt or anticipated by the Evangelists, in the writing of their history, can best be accounted for by the truth of the history itself, that the experience of years had blunted the edge of novelty, and rendered miracles familiar, not only to them, but to all the people to whom they addressed themselves.

19. What appears to us a most striking internal evidence for the truth of the gospel is, that perfect unity of mind and of purpose which is ascribed to our Saviour. Had He been an impostor,



He could not have foreseen all the fluctuations of His history ; and yet no expression of surprise is recorded to have escaped from Him. No event appears to have caught Him unprepared. We see no shifting of doctrine or sentiment, with a view to accommodate to new or unexpected circumstances. His parables and warnings to His disciples, give sufficient intimation that He laid His account with all those events, which appeared to His unenlightened friends to be so untoward and so unpromising. In every explanation of His objects, we see the perfect consistency of a mind, before whose prophetic eye all futurity lay open ; and, when the events of this futurity came round, He met them, not as chances that were unforeseen, but as certainties which He had provided for. This consistency of His views is supported through all the variations of His history ; and it stands finely contrasted in the record of the Evangelists, with the misconceptions, the surprises, the disappointments of His followers. The gradual progress of their minds, from the splendid anticipations of earthly grandeur to a full acquiescence in the doctrine of a crucified Saviour, throws a stronger light on the perfect unity of purpose and of conception which animated His, and which can only be accounted for by the inspiration that filled and enlightened it. It may have been possible enough to describe a well-sustained example of this contrast from an actual history before us. It is difficult, however, to conceive how it could be sustained so well, and in a manner so apparently artless, by means of invention ; and particularly when the inventors made their own errors and their own ignorance form part of the fabrication.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### ON THE TESTIMONY OF THE ORIGINAL WITNESSES TO THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE.

1.—III. THERE was nothing in the situation of the New Testament writers, which leads us to perceive that they had any possible inducement for publishing a falsehood.

2. We have not to allege the mere testimony of the Christian writers, for the danger to which the profession of Christianity exposed all its adherents at that period. We have the testimony of Tacitus to this effect. We have innumerable allusions, or

express intimations, of the same circumstance in the Roman historians. The treatment and persecution of the Christians makes a principal figure in the affairs of the empire ; and there is no point better established in ancient history, than that the bare circumstance of being a Christian brought many to the punishment of death, and exposed all to the danger of a suffering the most appalling and repulsive to the feelings of our nature.

3. It is not difficult to perceive why the Roman government, in its treatment of Christians, departed from its usual principles of toleration. We know it to have been their uniform practice to allow every indulgence to the religious belief of those different countries in which they established themselves. The truth is, that such an indulgence demanded of them no exertion of moderation or principle. It was quite consonant to the spirit of Paganism. A different country worshipped different gods ; but it was a general principle of Paganism, that each country had its gods, to which the inhabitants of that country owed their peculiar homage and veneration. In this way there was no interference between the different religions which prevailed in the world. It fell in with the policy of the Roman government to allow the fullest toleration to other religions, and it demanded no sacrifice of principle. It was even a dictate of principle with them to respect the gods of other countries ; and the violation of a religion different from their own seems to have been felt, not merely as a departure from policy or justice, but to be viewed with the same sentiment of horror which is annexed to blasphemy or sacrilege. So long as we were under Paganism, the truth of one religion did not involve in it the falsehood or rejection of another. In respecting the religion of another country, we did not abandon our own ; nor did it follow, that the inhabitants of that other country annexed any contempt or discredit to the religion in which we had been educated. In this mutual reverence for the religion of each other, no principle was departed from, and no object of veneration abandoned. It did not involve in it the denial or relinquishment of our own gods, but only the addition of so many more gods to our catalogue.

4. In this respect, however, the Jews stood distinguished from every other people within the limits of the Roman empire. Their religious belief carried in it something more than attachment to their own system. It carried in it the contempt and detestation of every other. Yet, in spite of this circumstance, their religion was protected by the mild and equitable toleration

of the Roman government. The truth is, that there was nothing in the habits or character of the Jews, which was calculated to give much disturbance to the establishments of other countries. Though they admitted converts from other nations, yet their spirit of proselytism was far from being of that active or adventurous kind, which could alarm the Roman government for the safety of any existing institutions. Their high and exclusive veneration for their own system, gave an unsocial disdain to the Jewish character, which was not at all inviting to foreigners; but still, as it led to nothing mischievous in point of effect, it seems to have been overlooked by the Roman government as a piece of impotent vanity.

5. But the case was widely different with the Christian system. It did not confine itself to the denial or rejection of every other system. It was for imposing its own exclusive authority over the consciences of all, and for detaching as many as it could from their allegiance to the religion of their own country. It carried on its forehead all the offensive characters of a monopoly, and not merely excited resentment by the supposed arrogance of its pretensions, but from the rapidity and extent of its innovations, spread an alarm over the whole Roman empire for the security of all its establishments. Accordingly, at the commencement of its progress, so long as it was confined to Judea and the immediate neighbourhood, it seems to have been in perfect safety from the persecutions of the Roman government. It was at first looked upon as a mere modification of Judaism, and that the first Christians differed from the rest of their own countrymen only in *certain questions of their own superstition*. For a few years after the crucifixion of our Saviour, it seems to have excited no alarm on the part of the Roman Emperors, who did not depart from their usual maxims of toleration, till they began to understand the magnitude of its pretensions, and the unlooked-for success which attended them.

6. In the course of a very few years after its first promulgation, it drew down upon it the hostility of the Roman government; and the fact is undoubted, that some of its first teachers, who announced themselves to be the companions of our Saviour, and the eye-witnesses of all the remarkable events in his history, suffered martyrdom for their adherence to the religion which they taught.

7. The disposition of the Jews to the religion of Jesus was no less hostile; and it manifested itself at a still earlier stage of



the business. The causes of this hostility are obvious to all who are in the slightest degree conversant with the history of those times. It is true that the Jews did not at all times possess the power of life and death, nor was it competent for them to bring the Christians to execution by the exercise of legal authority. Still, however, their powers of mischief were considerable. Their wishes had always a certain control over the measures of the Roman governor; and we know that it was this control which was the means of extorting from Pilate the unrighteous sentence, by which the very first Teacher of our religion was brought to a cruel and ignominious death. We also know that under Herod Agrippa the power of life and death was vested in a Jewish sovereign, and that this power was actually exerted against the most distinguished Christians of that time. Add to this, that the Jews had at all times the power of inflicting the lesser punishments. They could whip, they could imprison. Besides all this, the Christians had to brave the frenzy of an enraged multitude; and some of them actually suffered martyrdom in the violence of the popular commotions.

6. Nothing is more evident than the utter disgrace which was annexed by the world at large to the profession of Christianity at that period. Tacitus calls it "*superstitio exitiabilis*," and accuses the Christians of enmity to mankind. By Epictetus and others, their heroism is termed obstinacy; and it was generally treated by the Roman governors as the infatuation of a miserable and despised people. There was none of that glory annexed to it which blazes around the martyrdom of a patriot or a philosopher. That constancy which, in another cause, would have made them illustrious, was held to be a contemptible folly which only exposed them to the derision and insolence of the multitude. A name and a reputation in the world might sustain the dying moments of Socrates or Regulus; but what earthly principles can account for the intrepidity of those poor and miserable outcasts, who consigned themselves to a voluntary martyrdom in the cause of their religion?

9. Having premised these observations, we offer the following alternative to the mind of every candid inquirer. The first Christians either delivered a sincere testimony, or they imposed a story upon the world which they knew to be a fabrication.

10. The persecutions to which the first Christians voluntarily exposed themselves, compel us to adopt the first part of the alternative. It is not to be conceived that a man would resign

fortune and character and life, in the assertion of what he knew to be a falsehood. The first Christians must have believed their story to be true ; and it only remains to prove, that, if they believed it to be true, it must be true indeed.

11. A voluntary martyrdom must be looked upon as the highest possible evidence which it is in the power of man to give of his sincerity. The martyrdom of Socrates has never been questioned, as an undeniable proof of the sincere devotion of his mind to the principles of that philosophy for which he suffered. The death of Archbishop Cranmer will be allowed by all to be a decisive evidence of his sincere rejection of what he conceived to be the errors of Popery, and his thorough conviction of the truth of the opposite system. When the council of Geneva burnt Servetus, no one will question the sincerity of the latter's belief, however much he may question the truth of it. Now, in all these cases, the proof goes no further than to establish the sincerity of the martyr's belief. It goes but a little way indeed in establishing the justness of it. This is a different question. A man may be mistaken, though he be sincere. His errors, if they are not seen to be such, will exercise all the influence and authority of truth over him. Martyrs have bled on the opposite sides of the question. It is impossible, then, to rest on this circumstance as an argument for the truth of either system ; but the argument is always deemed incontrovertible, in as far as it goes to establish the sincerity of each of the parties, and that both died in the firm conviction of the doctrines which they professed.

12. Now, the martyrdom of the first Christians stands distinguished from all other examples by this circumstance, that it not merely proves the sincerity of the martyr's belief, but it also proves that what he believed was true. In other cases of martyrdom, the sufferer, when he lays down his life, gives his testimony to the truth of an opinion. In the case of the Christians, when they laid down their lives, they gave their testimony to the truth of a fact, of which they affirmed themselves to be the eye and the ear witnesses. The sincerity of both testimonies is unquestionable ; but it is only in the latter case that the truth of the testimony follows as a necessary consequence of its sincerity. An opinion comes under the cognizance of the understanding, ever liable, as we all know, to error and delusion. A fact comes under the cognizance of the senses, which have ever been esteemed as infallible, when they give their testimony to such

plain and obvious and palpable appearances, as those which make up the evangelical story. We are still at liberty to question the philosophy of Socrates, or the orthodoxy of Cranmer and Servetus; but if we were told by a Christian teacher, in the solemnity of his dying hour, and with the dread apparatus of martyrdom before him, that he saw Jesus after he had risen from the dead; that he conversed with him many days; that he put his hand into the print of his sides, and, in the ardour of his joyful conviction, exclaimed—"My Lord and my God!" we should feel that there was no truth in the world, did this language and this testimony deceive us.

13. If Christianity be not true, then the first Christians must have been mistaken as to the subject of their testimony. This supposition is destroyed by the nature of the subject. It was not testimony to a doctrine which might deceive the understanding. It was something more than testimony to a dream or a trance or a midnight fancy which might deceive the imagination. It was testimony to a multitude and a succession of palpable facts, which could never have deceived the senses, and which preclude all possibility of mistake, even though it had been the testimony only of one individual. But when, in addition to this, we consider that it is the testimony not of one, but of many individuals: that it is a story repeated in a variety of forms, but substantially the same; that it is the concurring testimony of different eye-witnesses or the companions of eye-witnesses—we may, after this, take refuge in the idea of falsehood and collusion; but it is not to be admitted, that these eight different writers of the New Testament could have all blundered the matter with such method and such uniformity.

14. We know that, in spite of the magnitude of their sufferings, there are infidels, who, driven from the first part of the alternative, have recurred to the second, and have affirmed that the glory of establishing a new religion induced the first Christians to assert, and to persist in asserting, what they knew to be a falsehood. But (though we should be anticipating the last branch of the argument) they forget that we have the concurrence of two parties to the truth of Christianity, and that it is the conduct only of one of the parties which can be accounted for by the supposition in question. The two parties are the teachers and the taught. The former may aspire to the glory of founding a new faith; but what glory did the latter propose to themselves from being the dupes of an imposition so ruinous to



every earthly interest, and held in such low and disgraceful estimation by the world at large? Abandon the teachers of Christianity to every imputation, which infidelity, on the rack for conjectures to give plausibility to its system, can devise; how shall we explain the concurrence of its disciples? There may be a glory in leading, but we see no glory in being led. If Christianity were false, and Paul had the effrontery to appeal to his five hundred living witnesses, whom he alleges to have seen Christ after His resurrection, the submissive acquiescence of his disciples remains a very inexplicable circumstance. The same Paul, in his Epistles to the Corinthians, tells them that some of them had the gift of healing and the power of working miracles; and that the signs of an apostle had been wrought among them in wonders and mighty deeds. A man, aspiring to the glory of an accredited teacher, would never have committed himself on a subject where his falsehood could have been so readily exposed. And in the veneration with which we know his epistles to have been preserved by the Church of Corinth, we have not merely the testimony of their writer to the truth of the Christian miracles, but the testimony of a whole people, who had no interest in being deceived.

15. Had Christianity been false, the reputation of its first teachers lay at the mercy of every individual among the numerous proselytes whom they had gained to their system. It may not be competent for an unlettered peasant to detect the absurdity of a doctrine; but he can at all times lift his testimony against a fact, said to have happened in his presence, and under the observation of his senses. Now it so happens, that in a number of the epistles, there are allusions to, or express intimations of, the miracles that had been wrought in the different churches to which these Epistles are addressed. How comes it, if it be at all a fabrication, that it was never exposed? We know that some of the disciples were driven by the terrors of persecuting violence to resign their profession. How should it happen, that none of them ever attempted to vindicate their apostasy, by laying open the artifice and insincerity of the Christian teachers? We may be sure that such a testimony would have been highly acceptable to the existing authorities of that period. The Jews would have made the most of it; and the vigilant and discerning officers of the Roman government would not have failed to turn it to account. The mystery would have been exposed and laid open, and the curiosity of later ages would

have been satisfied as to the wonderful and unaccountable steps, by which a religion could make such head in the world, though it rested its whole authority on facts; the falsehood of which was accessible to all who were at the trouble to inquire about them. But no! We hear of no such testimony from the apostates of that period. We read of some, who, agonized at the reflection of their treachery, returned to their first profession, and expiated, by martyrdom, the guilt which they felt they had incurred by their dereliction of the truth. This furnishes a strong example of the power of conviction; and when we join with it, that it is conviction in the integrity of those teachers who appealed to miracles which had been wrought among them, it appears to us a testimony in favour of our religion which is altogether irresistible.

16. But before taking leave of the original witnesses, let us state in what respect their testimony is so much stronger than that of any subsequent witness. The following as an example is the testimony of Quadratus, who flourished at the end of the first century:—"The works of our Saviour were always conspicuous, because they were real; both they that were healed, and they that were raised from the dead: who were seen not only when they were healed or raised, but for a long time afterwards. Not only whilst he dwelt on this earth, but also after his departure and for a good while after it, insomuch that some of them have reached to our times." This testimony of Quadratus excites a peculiar sense of confidence and satisfaction in the mind of every honest inquirer. It is the testimony of one standing without the canon of Scripture, and deposing to his own knowledge of some who had been raised from the dead by the apostles, and who were still surviving at the time that he wrote. It is felt as if bringing a great accession of strength and evidence to the miraculous story of the gospel; and we desiderate like testimonies from those Fathers who were stationed sufficiently near to the apostolic times, for handing down the same sort either of contemporaneous or at least of closely succeeding testimony to the men of distant ages.

17. Now it were well that we made the application to this case of a very obvious principle, in questions of historic faith. That written evidence for the reality of any transactions which was most satisfying to the men of the age when they happened, should also, if transmitted downwards, be the most satisfying to us. The epistle of Barnabas the fellow-labourer of Paul is of a moral or hortatory rather than of a historical character; but,

in the judgment of these days, it was not thought worthy of a place in the canon. Suppose that his subject had led him, which it did not, to make several such historical allusions as the one we so highly prize by Quadratus—we should have felt a weight and an impression in the testimony, which we do not feel in the explicit and distinct testimony of Mark, who was altogether historical. Now by this feeling we reverse the principle which has just been announced. It was the distincter information, the weightier evidence and authority of Mark, which preferred him to the place he now occupies within the limits of the New Testament; and it was the inferiority of Barnabas in these particulars, which determined his station to be that not of a principal but of a subsequent and a subordinate witness. Had there been no Barnabas, and had Mark with his actual Gospel been standing in his place—the disappearance of one of the Evangelists from the Bible would have made no sensible abatement in the original evidence, but a mighty addition certainly to the subsequent evidence for the truth of the Christian story; yet, whatever effect this altered state of things may have had on our impression of the credibility of the gospel, it is certain that the evidence as it stands is of greater substantive validity or force, than it would have been under the hypothesis that we are now making. We should have had no Barnabas; and Mark, of inferior grade to what he now is, occupying a lower place than he does at present—just because held, in the age that was best qualified to estimate his pretensions, to be more unworthy of that credit and of that confidence which then raised him to the scriptural rank that he enjoys.

18. We may now see the reason why in the writings of the apostolic or succeeding Fathers we have no professed narrative of the miracles of the Gospels. We have abundant incidental attestations to their truth; and throughout, all the symptoms that we could desire of a common understanding and a common faith upon this subject, between themselves and the Christian public whom they addressed. But for any of them to undertake a formal or express history of these miraculous transactions, was a thing quite uncalled for, and for that very reason not attempted. The truth is, that in the superior estimation of the histories already before the world, there would have been no demand for their less authoritative and authentic compositions. Readers would just have done then what readers do now—turned them to the fullest and the most accredited historians of the transac-



tions, wherewith they wanted to acquaint themselves, and in so doing, neglected the others. And the sure consequence in these days of laborious book-making, the sure consequence of neglect was speedy oblivion. Copies would have ceased to be multiplied, when copies were little or not at all in request—so that, had a thing so unnecessary as a Gospel by Barnabas, or Clement, or Polycarp been actually produced, it would have been left to perish, just by the superior confidence of their age in the actual Gospels of our own unperishable record. Strange that we should feel less satisfied with documents which now stand alone, precisely because they monopolized the whole truth and satisfaction of contemporaries, or that in comparison with them we should feel so longing an appetency for other narratives, which, if ever they existed, were so undervalued by these contemporaries as to pass into irrecoverable extinction and be forgotten.

19. Luke, in the introduction to his Gospel, refers to memoirs of the life and history of our Saviour. How delighted we should be, if, among the ruins of Pompeii, we should lay hold of an evident and authentic copy of one of these memoirs! And why is it that none of them have been transmitted to us? For no other reason than that the best judges of their value thought them unworthy of the honour. The truth is, that they have all been superseded by the Gospels of the New Testament—even those which, in the language of Luke, set the whole narrative with greater authority and distinctness before the Christian community—so that, in the documents we actually have, there is a ten-fold surpassing weight both of authority and evidence over all that we so insatiably aspire after.

20. The great number of scriptural manuscripts, compared with the small number of the manuscripts of all other books, is of itself a testimony in favour of the original witnesses for the truth of the gospel narratives. Not that the works which have disappeared were always of small value; for they may have since been superseded by other works which answered the purpose so much better, that copies of the former ones were no more called for. For example, there seems to have been a number of small separate memoirs of our Saviour during the time of the apostles—perhaps taken by eye and ear witnesses on the spot; or it may be immediately collected from the hearsay information of his companions and disciples. The accounts alluded to by Luke at the commencement of his Gospel seem to have been of this description; but after Luke took in hand, out of these and other ma-

terials within his reach, to publish a more distinct and comprehensive narrative—copies of these minor records would cease to be multiplied. The whole demand would be turned to the fuller and more authentic statements of the Evangelists; and, without any reflection on the general accuracy of the prior documents, they would fall into desuetude, simply from their being inferior to those which succeeded them in authority and fulness, and so would ultimately disappear.

21. Now we all feel it would be an infinite gratification if some of these original memoirs had been transmitted to the present day. With what eagerness of curiosity should we peruse any relic of this sort, if discovered and demonstrated on satisfactory evidence to be one of the very pieces which Luke had adverted to; and what is more, we should feel as if a distinct confirmation had been given to the evangelical story by the addition of such a testimony to those which are already in our possession. Now the want of these supplementary testimonies arises from the very worth and sufficiency of those testimonies which have actually been transmitted to us. That want of additional documents which we do not have, and which some might feel to be a symptom of defect, proceeds in fact from an altogether opposite cause, from the strength and abundance of those documents which we do have. It was a serious labour to multiply books in those days; and, generally speaking, it would not have been done without a practical necessity; and they who read for the practical object of informing themselves respecting the Saviour, would naturally prefer those narratives which were most esteemed for their worth and copiousness, and had the stamp of greatest authority affixed to them. Had they felt it desirable or useful, over and above the accounts of the four Evangelists, to read the lesser memoirs also; this might have given rise to such a demand as would lead to a renewal of their copies, and so to their preservation. But the very reason why they were suffered to perish is, because of their felt insignificance and worthlessness at the time, when compared with the pieces which have come down to us. In the fact of their disappearance, we behold the testimony of that contemporaneous age to the superior value of those actual Scriptures which have been admitted in our canon; or, in other words, the judgment to this effect of the men best qualified, by their opportunities of observation, and their nearness to the events of the gospel history. In the credit and completeness of the four Gospels, they felt themselves independent of these sup-

plementary memoirs ; and by what strange illusion, then, is it that we should not feel the same independence, or that we should desiderate, and for the purpose of gaining more evidence too, those additional memorials—when the very fact of their having been permitted to go into oblivion, if viewed aright, would enhance the splendour of that evidence which beams direct upon us from the canonical Scriptures themselves. It is true that they are lost ; but they have been lost in that blaze of light which shone upon the Church from the writings of apostles and apostolic men.

22. We have already put the case of Mark having had a station assigned to him, which he only could have had, because of the inferior estimation in which he was held by his contemporaries—so that, in the state in which he has actually come down to us, his testimony is absolutely of greater value, however weaker the impression may be which it makes upon us. Without insisting longer upon this case, we hold it of importance to remark while upon the subject, that, works may have disappeared which produced a great effect in their day, and have left behind them a permanent benefit which shall be felt to the latest ages of the Church. Take, for an example, the Hexapla of Origen, the first of our scriptural polyglots, consisting of the Hebrew Old Testament in Hebrew and Greek characters, along with four distinct versions of the same in Greek—that is, the Septuagint, and those of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. This stupendous work, consisting as it did of forty or fifty manuscript volumes, could not have been multiplied and transmitted but at a prodigious expense ; and it is not therefore to be wondered at, that so few remains of it should have survived to the present day. Yet who can doubt the enduring benefit which the Church has received from this work, in restoring and purifying the sacred text, and so improving every subsequent edition that was framed by those who availed themselves of the labours of its author.

23. At all events it remains a sensible proof of the estimation in which the Scriptures in former ages have been held over all other books—the immense superiority in the number of its existing manuscripts over those of all other works. It gives, as it were, the evidence of eye-sight to our cause. A work not possessing authority, was simply left to disappear from the non-multiplication of its copies. Whereas, on the other hand, the indefinite number of ancient copies of the Sacred Scriptures actually before our eyes, speaks most decisively for the concurrent



reverence in which these records were held in earlier times. The force of this consideration will be unfelt by those who stop short at any century in the Middle Ages, and conceive of it as the fountainhead of this sort of testimony. But when, on the faith of undoubted documents, we can carry upwards the same expression of a preference for the Scriptures over all other works, to those ages when Christianity was an oppressed and suffering religion—such an expression of general respect and confidence for the Scriptures at such periods, carries an evidence along with it that is quite irresistible.

24. On the whole, then, it may be concluded, that the evidence for the truth of Christianity does not commence with Barnabas, the first of the apostolic Fathers. It has an origin in the writers themselves of the Inspired Volume; and, broad and brilliant as the flood of light is which descends along the historic pathway of the Christian Church, there is even a surpassing brilliancy in that primitive halo by which the fountainhead is irradiated.

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## CHAPTER V.

### ON THE TESTIMONY OF SUBSEQUENT WITNESSES.

1.—IV. BUT this brings us to the last division of the argument, viz., that the leading facts in the history of the gospel are corroborated by the testimony of others.

2. The evidence we have already brought forward for the antiquity of the New Testament, and the veneration in which it was held from the earliest ages of the Church, is an implied testimony of all the Christians of that period to the truth of the gospel history. By proving the genuineness of St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, we do not merely establish his testimony to the truth of the Christian miracles—we establish the additional testimony of the whole church of Corinth, who would never have respected these epistles, if Paul had ventured upon a falsehood so open to detection, as the assertion, that miracles were wrought among them, which not a single individual ever witnessed. By proving the genuineness of the New Testament at large, we secure, not merely that argument which is founded on the testimony and concurrence of its different writers, but also the testimony of those immense multitudes, who, in distant countries,

submitted to the New Testament as the rule of their faith. The testimony of the teachers, whether we take into consideration the subject of that testimony, or the circumstances under which it was delivered, is of itself a stronger argument for the truth of the gospel history, than can be alleged for the truth of any other history which has been transmitted down to us from ancient times. The concurrence of the taught carries along with it a host of additional testimonies, which gives an evidence to the evangelical story, that is altogether unexampled. On a point of ordinary history, the testimony of Tacitus is held decisive, because it is not contradicted. The history of the New Testament is not only not contradicted, but confirmed by the strongest possible expressions which men can give of their acquiescence in its truth; by thousands, who were either agents or eye-witnesses of the transactions recorded; who could not be deceived; who had no interest, and no glory to gain by supporting a falsehood; and who, by their sufferings in the cause of what they professed to be their belief, gave the highest evidence that human nature can give of sincerity.

3. In this circumstance it may be perceived how much the evidence for Christianity goes beyond all ordinary historical evidence. A profane historian relates a series of events which happen in a particular age; and we count it well, if it be his own age, and if the history which he gives us be the testimony of a contemporary author. Another historian succeeds him at the distance of years, and by repeating the same story, gives the additional evidence of his testimony to its truth. A third historian perhaps goes over the same ground, and lends another confirmation to the history. And it is thus, by collecting all the lights which are thinly scattered over the tract of ages and of centuries, that we obtain all the evidence which can be got, and all the evidence that is generally wished for.

4. Now, there is room for a thousand presumptions, which, if admitted, would overturn the whole of this evidence. For anything we know, the first historians may have had some interest in disguising the truth, or substituting in its place a falsehood and a fabrication. True, it has not been contradicted; but they form a very small number of men who feel strongly or particularly interested in a question of history. The literary and speculative men of that age may have perhaps been engaged in other pursuits, or their testimonies may have perished in the wreck of centuries. The second historian may have been so far removed.

in point of time from the events of his narrative, that he can furnish us not with an independent but with a derived testimony. He may have copied his account from the original historian, and the falsehood have come down to us in the shape of an authentic and well-attested history. Presumptions may be multiplied without end; yet in spite of them, there is a natural confidence in the veracity of man, which disposes us to as firm a belief in many of the facts of ancient history as in the occurrences of the present day.

5. The history of the gospel, however, stands distinguished from all other history, by the uninterrupted nature of its testimony, which carries down its evidence, without a chasm, from its earliest promulgation to the present day. We do not speak of the superior weight and splendour of its evidences, at the first publication of that history, as being supported not merely by the testimony of one, but by the concurrence of several independent witnesses. We do not speak of its subsequent writers, who follow one another in a far closer and more crowded train than there is any other example of in the history or literature of the world. We speak of the strong though unwritten testimony of its numerous proselytes, who, in the very fact of their proselytism, give the strongest possible confirmation to the gospel, and fill up every chasm in the recorded evidence of past times.

6. In the written testimonies for the truth of the Christian religion, Barnabas comes next in order to the first promulgators of the evangelical story. He was a contemporary of the apostles, and writes a very few years after the publication of the pieces which make up the New Testament. Clement follows, who was a fellow-labourer of Paul, and writes an epistle in the name of the church of Rome, to the church of Corinth. The written testimonies follow one another with a closeness and a rapidity of which there is no example; but what we insist on at present is, the unwritten and implied testimony of the people who composed these two churches. There can be no fact better established than that these two churches were planted in the days of the apostles, and that the Epistles which were respectively addressed to them, were held in the utmost authority and veneration. There is no doubt that the leading facts of the gospel history were familiar to them; that it was in the power of many individuals amongst them to verify these facts, either by their own personal observation, or by an actual conversation with eye-witnesses; and that, in particular, it was in the power of almost every individual in the church of



Corinth, either to verify the miracles which St. Paul alludes to in his Epistle to that church, or to detect and expose the imposition, had there been no foundation for such an allusion. What do we see in all this but the strongest possible testimony of a whole people to the truth of the Christian miracles? There is nothing like this in common history—the formation of a society which can only be explained by the history of the gospel, and where the conduct of every individual furnishes a distinct pledge and evidence of its truth. And to have a full view of the argument, we must reflect that it is not one, but many societies scattered over the different countries of the world; that the principle upon which each society was formed was the Divine authority of Christ and His apostles, resting upon the recorded miracles of the New Testament; that these miracles were wrought with a publicity, and at a nearness of time, which rendered them accessible to the inquiries of all, for upwards of half a century; that nothing but the power of conviction could have induced the people of that age to embrace a religion so disgraced and so persecuted; that every temptation was held out for its disciples to abandon it; and that though some of them, overpowered by the terrors of punishment, were driven to apostasy, yet not one of them has left us a testimony which can impeach the miracles of Christianity, or the integrity of its first teachers.

7. It may be observed, that in pursuing the line of continuity from the days of the apostles, the written testimonies for the truth of the Christian miracles follow one another in closer succession, than we have any other example of in ancient history. But what gives such peculiar and unprecedented evidence to the history of the gospel is, that in the concurrence of the multitudes who embraced it, and in the existence of those numerous churches and societies of men who espoused the profession of the Christian faith, we cannot but perceive that every small interval of time betwixt the written testimonies of authors is filled up by materials so strong and so firmly cemented, as to present us with an unbroken chain of evidence, carrying as much authority along with it as if it had been a diurnal record, commencing from the days of the apostles, and authenticated through its whole progress by the testimony of thousands.

8. Every convert to the Christian faith in those days, gives one additional testimony to the truth of the gospel history. Is he a Gentile? The sincerity of his testimony is approved by

the persecutions, the sufferings, the danger, and often the certainty of martyrdom, which the profession of Christianity incurred. Is he a Jew? The sincerity of his testimony is approved by all these evidences, and, in addition to them, by this well-known fact, that the faith and doctrine of Christianity were in the highest degree repugnant to the wishes and prejudices of that people. It ought never to be forgotten that, in as far as Jews are concerned, Christianity does not owe a single proselyte to its doctrines, but to the power and credit of its evidences, and that Judea was the chief theatre on which these evidences were exhibited. It cannot be too often repeated, that these evidences rest not upon arguments but upon facts; and that the time, and the place, and the circumstances, rendered these facts accessible to the inquiries of all who chose to be at the trouble of this examination. And there can be no doubt that this trouble was taken, whether we reflect on the nature of the Christian faith, as being so offensive to the pride and bigotry of the Jewish people, or whether we reflect on the consequences of embracing it, which were derision, and hatred, and banishment, and death. We may be sure that a step which involved in it such painful sacrifices, would not be entered into upon light and insufficient grounds. In the sacrifices they made, the Jewish converts gave every evidence of having delivered an honest testimony in favour of the Christian miracles; and when we reflect, that many of them must have been eye-witnesses, and all of them had it in their power to verify these miracles, by conversation and correspondence with bystanders, there can be no doubt that it was not merely an honest, but a competent testimony. There is no fact better established, than that many thousands among the Jews believed in Jesus and His apostles; and we have therefore to allege their conversion as a strong additional confirmation of the written testimony of the original historians.

9. One of the popular objections against the truth of the Christian miracles, is the general infidelity of the Jewish people. We are convinced, that at the moment of proposing this objection, an actual delusion exists in the mind of the infidel. In his conception, the Jews and the Christians stand opposed to each other. In the belief of the latter, he sees nothing but a party, or an interested testimony; and in the unbelief of the former, he sees a whole people persevering in their ancient faith, and resisting the new faith on the ground of its insufficient evidences. He forgets all the while that the testimony of a great many of

these Christians is in fact the testimony of Jews. He only attends to them in their present capacity. He contemplates them in the light of Christians, and annexes to them all that suspicion and incredulity which are generally annexed to the testimony of an interested party. He is aware of what they are at present—Christians, and defenders of Christianity; but he has lost sight of their original situation, and is totally unmindful of this circumstance, that in their transition from Judaism to Christianity they have given him the very evidence he is in quest of. Had another thousand of these Jews renounced the faith of their ancestors, and embraced the religion of Jesus, they would have been equivalent to a thousand additional testimonies in favour of Christianity; and testimonies, too, of the strongest and most unsuspecting kind that can well be imagined. But this evidence would make no impression on the mind of an infidel, and the strength of it is disguised, even from the eyes of the Christian. These thousand, in the moment of their conversion, lose the appellation of Jews, and merge into the name and distinction of Christians. The Jews, though diminished in number, retain the national appellation; and the obstinacy with which they persevere in the belief of their ancestors, is still looked upon as the adverse testimony of an entire people. So long as one of that people continues a Jew, his testimony is looked upon as a serious impediment in the way of the Christian evidences. But the moment he becomes a Christian, his motives are contemplated with distrust. He is one of the obnoxious and suspected party. The mind carries a reference only to what he is, and not to what he has been. It overlooks the change of sentiment; and forgets that, in the renunciation of old habits and old prejudices; in defiance to sufferings and disgrace; in attachment to a religion so repugnant to the pride and bigotry of their nation; and above all, in submission to a system of doctrines which rested its authority on the miracles of their own time, and their own remembrance; every Jewish convert gives the most decisive testimony which man can give for the truth and divinity of our religion.

10. But why then, says the infidel, did they not all believe? Had the miracles of the gospel been true, we do not see how human nature could have held out against an evidence so striking and so extraordinary; nor can we at all enter into the obstinacy of that belief which is ascribed to the majority of the Jewish people, and which led them to shut their eyes against



a testimony, that no man of common sense, we think, could have resisted.

11. Many Christian writers have attempted to resolve this difficulty; and to prove that the infidelity of the Jews, in spite of the miracles which they saw, is perfectly consistent with the known principles of human nature. For this purpose, they have enlarged, with much force and plausibility, on the strength and inveteracy of the Jewish prejudices—on the bewildering influence of religious bigotry upon the understanding of men—on the woful disappointment which Christianity offered to the pride and interests of the nation—on the selfishness of the priesthood—and on the facility with which they might turn a blind and fanatical multitude, who had been trained by their earliest habits to follow and to revere them.

12. In the gospel history itself, we have a very consistent account at least of the Jewish opposition to the claims of our Saviour. We see the deeply-wounded pride of a nation that felt itself disgraced by the loss of its independence. We see the arrogance of its peculiar and exclusive claims to the favour of the Almighty. We see the anticipation of a great prince, who was to deliver them from the power and subjection of their enemies. We see their insolent contempt for the people of other countries, and the foulest scorn that they should be admitted to an equality with themselves in the honours and benefits of a revelation from heaven. We may easily conceive how much the doctrine of Christ and His apostles was calculated to gall and irritate and disappoint them; how it must have mortified their national vanity; how it must have alarmed the jealousy of an artful and interested priesthood; and how it must have scandalized the great body of the people by the liberality with which it addressed itself to all men, and to all nations, and raised to an elevation with themselves, those whom the firmest habits and prejudices of their country had led them to contemplate under all the disgrace and ignominy of outcasts.

13. Accordingly we know, in fact, that bitterness, and resentment, and wounded pride, lay at the bottom of a great deal of the opposition which Christianity experienced from the Jewish people. In the New Testament history itself, we see repeated examples of their outrageous violence; and this is confirmed by the testimony of many other writers. In the history of the martyrdom of Polycarp, it is stated, that the Gentiles and Jews inhabiting Smyrna, in a furious rage, and with a loud voice,

cried out, "This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods, who teacheth all men not to sacrifice nor to worship them!" They collected wood and the dried branches of trees for his pile; and it is added, "the Jews also, according to custom, assisting with the greatest forwardness." It is needless to multiply testimonies to a point so generally understood, as that it was not conviction alone which lay at the bottom of their opposition to the Christians; that a great deal of passion entered into it; and that their numerous acts of hostility against the worshippers of Jesus, carry in them all the marks of fury and resentment.

14. Now we know that the power of passion will often carry it very far over the power of conviction. We know that the strength of conviction is not in proportion to the quantity of evidence *presented*, but to the quantity of evidence *attended to* and perceived, in consequence of that attention. We also know that attention is, in a great measure, a voluntary act; and that it is often in the power of the mind both to turn away its attention from what would land it in any painful or humiliating conclusion, and to deliver itself up exclusively to those arguments which flatter its taste and its prejudices. All this lies within the range of familiar and every-day experience. We all know how much it insures the success of an argument when it gets a *favourable* hearing. In by far the greater number of instances, the parties in a litigation are not merely each *attached* to their own side of the question; but each *confident and believing* that theirs is the side on which the justice lies. In those contests of opinion, which take place every day between man and man, and particularly if passion and interest have any share in the controversy, it is evident to the slightest observation, that though it might have been selfishness in the first instance, which gave a peculiar direction to the understanding, yet each of the parties often comes at last to entertain a sincere conviction in the truth of his own argument. It is not that truth is not one and immutable; the whole difference lies in the observers, each of them viewing the object through the medium of his own prejudices, or cherishing those peculiar habits of attention and understanding to which taste or inclination had disposed him.

15. In addition to all this we know, that though the evidence for a particular truth be so glaring, that it forces itself upon the understanding, and all the sophistry of passion and interest cannot withstand it; yet, if this truth be of a very painful and humili-



ating kind, the obstinacy of man will often dispose him to resist its influence, and, in the bitterness of his malignant feelings, to carry a hostility against it, and that, too, in proportion to the weight of the argument which may be brought forward in its favour.

16. Now, if we take into account the inveteracy of the Jewish prejudices, and reflect how unpalatable and how mortifying to their pride must have been the doctrine of a crucified Saviour; we believe that their conduct, in reference to Christianity and its miraculous evidences, presents us with nothing anomalous or inexplicable, and that it will appear a possible and a likely thing to every understanding, that has been much cultivated in the experience of human affairs, in the nature of mind, and in the science of its character and phenomena.

17. There is a difficulty, however, in the way of this investigation. From the nature of the case it bears no resemblance to anything else that has either been recorded in history, or has come within the range of our own personal observation. There is no other example of a people called upon to renounce the darling faith and principles of their country, and that upon the authority of miracles exhibited before them. All the experience we have about the operation of prejudice, and the perverseness of the human temper and understanding, cannot afford a complete solution of the question. In many respects it is a case *sui generis*; and the only creditable information which we can obtain, to enlighten us in this inquiry, is through the medium of that very testimony upon which the difficulty in question has thrown the suspicion that we want to get rid of.

18. Let us give all the weight to this argument of which it is susceptible, and the following is the precise degree in which it affects the merits of the controversy. When the religion of Jesus was promulgated in Judea, its first teachers appealed to miracles wrought by themselves, in the face of day, as the evidence of their being commissioned by God. Many adopted the new religion upon this appeal, and many rejected it. An argument in favour of Christianity is derived from the conduct of the first. An objection against Christianity is derived from the conduct of the second. Now, allowing that we are not in possession of experience enough for estimating, in *absolute terms*, the strength of the objection, we propose the following as a solid and unexceptionable principle, upon which to estimate a comparison betwixt the strength of the objection, and the strength of the argument. We are sure that the first would not have



embraced Christianity had its miracles been false ; but we are not sure beforehand, whether the second would have rejected this religion on the supposition of the miracles being true. If experience does not enlighten us as to how far the exhibition of a real miracle would be effectual in inducing men to renounce their old and favourite opinions, we can infer nothing decisive from the conduct of those who still kept by the Jewish religion. This conduct was a matter of uncertainty, and any argument which may be extracted from it, cannot be depended upon. But the case is widely different with that party of their nation who were converted from Judaism to Christianity. We know that the alleged miracles of Christianity were perfectly open to examination. We are sure, from our experience of human nature, that in a question so interesting, this examination would be given. We know, from the very nature of the miraculous facts, so remote from everything like what would be attempted by jugglery, or pretended to by enthusiasm, that, if this examination were given, it would fix the truth or falsehood of the miracles. The truth of these miracles, then, for anything we know, may be consistent with the conduct of the Jewish party ; but the falsehood of these miracles, from all that we do know of human nature, is not consistent with the conduct of the Christian party. Granting that we are *not sure* whether a miracle would force the Jewish nation to renounce their opinions, all that we can say of the conduct of the Jewish party is, that we are not able to explain it. But there is one thing that we *are sure* of. We are sure, that if the pretensions of Christianity be false, it never could have forced any part of the Jewish nation to renounce their opinions, with its alleged miracles so open to detection, and its doctrines so offensive to every individual. The conduct of the Christian party then is not only what we are able to explain, but we can say with certainty, that it admits of no other explanation, than the truth of that hypothesis which we contend for. We may not know in how far an attachment to existing opinions will prevail over an argument which is felt to be true ; but we are sure, that this attachment will never give way to an argument which is perceived to be false ; and particularly when danger, and hatred, and persecution, are the consequences of embracing it. The argument for Christianity, from the conduct of the first proselytes, rests upon the firm ground of experience. The objection against it, from the conduct of the unbelieving Jews, has no experience whatever to rest upon.

19. The conduct of the Jews may be considered as a solitary fact in the history of the world ; not from its being an exception to the general principles of human nature, but from its being an exhibition of human nature in singular circumstances. We have no experience to guide us in our opinion as to the probability of this conduct ; and nothing, therefore, that can impeach a testimony which all experience in human affairs leads us to repose in as unquestionable. But, after this testimony is admitted, we may submit to be enlightened by it ; and in the history which it gives us of the unbelieving Jews, it furnishes a curious fact as to the power of prejudice upon the human mind, and a valuable accession to what we before knew of the principles of our nature. It lays before us an exhibition of the human mind in a situation altogether unexampled, and furnishes us with the result of a singular experiment, if we may so call it, in the history of the species. We offer it as an interesting fact to the moral and intellectual philosopher, that a previous attachment may sway the mind even against the impression of a miracle ; and those who believe not in the historical evidence which established the authority of Christ and of the apostles, would not believe, even though one rose from the dead.

20. We are inclined to think, that the argument has come down to us in the best possible form, and that it would have been enfeebled by that very circumstance, which the infidel demands as essential to its validity. Suppose, for a moment, that we could give him what he wants ; that all the priests and people of Judea were so borne down by the resistless evidence of miracles, as, by one universal consent, to become the disciples of the new religion. What interpretation might have been given to this unanimous movement in favour of Christianity ? A very unfavourable one, we apprehend, to the authenticity of its evidences. Will the infidel say, that he has a higher respect for the credibility of those miracles which ushered in the dispensation of Moses, because they were exhibited in the face of a whole people, and gained their unexcepted submission to the laws and the ritual of Judaism ? This new revolution would have received the same explanation. We would have heard of its being sanctioned by their prophecies ; of its being agreeable to their prejudices ; of its being supported by the countenance and encouragement of their priesthood ; and that the jugglery of its miracles imposed upon all, because all were willing to be deceived by them. The actual form in which the history has come



down, presents us with an argument free of all these exceptions. We, in the first instance, behold a number of proselytes, whose testimony to the facts of Christianity is approved of by what they lost and suffered in the maintenance of their faith; and we, in the second instance, behold a number of enemies, eager, vigilant, and exasperated, at the progress of the new religion, who have not questioned the authenticity of our histories, and whose silence, as to the public and widely talked of miracles of Christ and His apostles, we have a right to interpret into the most triumphant of all testimonies.

21. The same process of reasoning is applicable to the case of the Gentiles. Many adopted the new religion, and many rejected it. We may not be sure if we can give an adequate explanation of the conduct of the latter, on the supposition that the evidences are true; but we are perfectly sure, that we can give no adequate explanation of the conduct of the former, on the supposition that the evidences are false. For anything we know, it is possible that the one party may have adhered to their former prejudices, in opposition to all the force and urgency of argument, which even an authentic miracle carries along with it. But we know that it is not possible that the other party should renounce these prejudices, and that too in the face of danger and persecution, unless the miracles had been authentic. So great is the difference betwixt the strength of the argument and the strength of the objection, that we count it fortunate for the merits of the cause, that the conversions to Christianity were partial. We in this way secure all the support which is derived from the inexplicable fact of the silence of its enemies; inexplicable on every supposition, but the undeniable evidence and certainty of the miracles. Had the Roman empire made a unanimous movement to the new religion, and all the authorities of the state lent their concurrence to it, there would have been a suspicion annexed to the whole history of the gospel, which cannot at present apply to it; and, from the collision of the opposite parties, the truth has come down to us in a far more unquestionable form than if no such collision had been excited.

22. The silence of heathen and Jewish writers of that period, about the miracles of Christianity, has been much insisted upon by the enemies of our religion; and has even excited something like a painful suspicion in the breasts of those who are attached to its cause. Certain it is that no ancient facts have come down to us, supported by a greater quantity of historical evidence,



and better accompanied with all the circumstances which can confer credibility on that evidence. When we demand the testimony of Tacitus to the Christian miracles, we forget all the while that we can allege a multitude of much more decisive testimonies;—no less than eight contemporary authors, and a train of succeeding writers, who follow one another with a closeness and a rapidity of which there is no example in any other department of ancient history. We forget that the authenticity of these different writers, and their pretensions to credit, are founded on considerations perfectly the same in kind, though much stronger in degree, than what have been employed to establish the testimony of the most esteemed historians of former ages. For the history of the gospel, we behold a series of testimonies more continuous, and more firmly sustained, than there is any other example of in the whole compass of erudition. And to refuse this evidence, is a proof that, in this investigation, there is an aptitude in the human mind to abandon all ordinary principles, and to be carried away by the delusions which we have already insisted on.

23. But let us try the effect of that testimony which our antagonists demand. Tacitus has actually attested the existence of Jesus Christ; the reality of such a personage; His public execution under the administration of Pontius Pilate; the temporary check which this gave to the progress of His religion; its revival a short time after His death; its progress over the land of Judea, and to Rome itself, the metropolis of the empire;—all this we have in a Roman historian; and, in opposition to all established reasoning upon these subjects, it is by some more firmly confided in upon his testimony, than upon the numerous and concurring testimonies of nearer and contemporary writers. But be this as it may, let us suppose that Tacitus had thrown one particular more into his testimony, and that his sentence had run thus: “They had their denomination from Christus, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal by the procurator Pontius Pilate, *and who rose from the dead on the third day after his execution, and ascended into heaven.*” Does it not strike everybody, that however true the last piece of information may be, and however well-established by its proper historians, this is not the place where we can expect to find it? If Tacitus did not believe the resurrection of our Saviour (which is probably the case, as he never in all likelihood paid any attention to the evidence of a faith which he was led to

regard, from the outset, as a pernicious superstition, and a mere modification of Judaism), it is not to be supposed that such an assertion could ever have been made by him. If Tacitus did believe the resurrection of our Saviour, he gives us an example of what appears not to have been uncommon in these ages—he gives us an example of a man adhering to that system which interest and education recommended in opposition to the evidence of a miracle which he admitted to be true. Still, even on this supposition, it is the most unlikely thing in the world, that he would have admitted the fact of our Saviour's resurrection into his history. It is most improbable that a testimony of this kind would have been given, even though the resurrection of Jesus Christ had been admitted; and, therefore, the want of this testimony carries in it no argument that the resurrection is a falsehood. If, however, in opposition to all probability, this testimony had been given, it would have been appealed to as a most striking confirmation of the main fact of the evangelical history. It would have figured away in all our elementary treatises, and been referred to as a master-argument in every exposition of the evidences of Christianity. Infidels would have been challenged to believe in it on the strength of their own favourite evidence, the evidence of a classical historian; and must have been at a loss how to dispose of this fact, when they saw an unbiassed heathen giving his round and unqualified testimony in its favour.

24. Let us now carry this supposition a step further. Let us conceive that Tacitus not only believed the fact, and gave his testimony to it, but that he believed it so far as to become a Christian. Is his testimony to be refused, because he gives this evidence of its sincerity? Tacitus asserting the fact, and remaining a heathen, is not so strong an argument for the truth of our Saviour's resurrection, as Tacitus asserting the fact and becoming a Christian in consequence of it. Yet the moment that this transition is made—a transition by which, in point of fact, his testimony becomes stronger—in point of impression it becomes less; and, by a delusion common to the infidel and the believer, the argument is held to be weakened by the very circumstance which imparts greater force to it. The elegant and accomplished scholar becomes a believer. The truth, the novelty, the importance of this new subject, withdraw him from every other pursuit. He shares in the common enthusiasm of the cause, and gives all his talents and eloquence to the support of it. Instead of the Roman historian, Tacitus comes down to posterity in the shape



of a Christian Father, and the high authority of his name is lost in a crowd of similar testimonies.

25. A direct testimony to the miracles of the New Testament from the mouth of a heathen is not to be expected. We cannot satisfy this demand of the infidel; but we can give him a host of much stronger testimonies than he is in quest of—the testimonies of those men who were heathens, and who embraced a hazardous and a disgraceful profession, under a deep conviction of those facts to which they gave their testimony. “Oh, but you now land us in the testimony of Christians!” This is very true; but it is the very fact of their being Christians in which the strength of the argument lies: and in each of the numerous Fathers of the Christian Church, we see a stronger testimony than the required testimony of the heathen Tacitus. We see men who, if they had not been Christians, would have risen to as high an eminence as Tacitus in the literature of the times; and whose direct testimonies to the gospel history would, in that case, have been most impressive, even to the mind of an infidel. And are these testimonies to be less impressive, because they were preceded by conviction, and sealed by martyrdom?

26. This is a matter of so much importance that it is worthy of still further illustration. It were well that it could be made quite palpable, why it is that a Christian is so much more valuable than a heathen testimony. We have already adverted to a certain subtle delusion on this subject, in virtue of which it is not felt to be so valuable—insomuch that there is not only a greater feeling of curiosity, but even a greater feeling of conviction associated with the remotest allusion of a classic author to Christianity than there is with the broad, distinct, authentic, and uncontradicted testimony of a Christian Father. It is thus that a deep and subtle disguise is thrown over the real strength of the Christian argument; and in opposition to all the principles of sound criticism or of historical evidence, the faintest scintillations of a notice or an allusion from writers at a distance and uninformed, are most eagerly caught at—while a broad effulgence of testimony in the scene of the gospel transactions, of testimony sealed by the martyrdom of those who gave it, of testimony accredited by the silence of enemies as well as by a countless multitude of proselytes to the cause—all is overlooked and forgotten as a thing of nought. With how much greater interest, for example, do we read Lardner’s Collection of Jewish and Heathen Testimonies in favour of the gospel narrative, than Lardner’s Credibility—the latter work



exhibiting a succession of Christian authors, following each other at an average interval of not more than ten years, and composing altogether a hundred-fold more firm and continuous pathway than any other by which the facts or the informations of ancient times have descended to the men of the present day. Let us feel assured that, in this preference of the weak to the strong, of the dim and dying testimony to the daylight effulgence which sits on the origin of our Church, and sends down a stream of direct historic light through its successive generations—that, in this, there is some mental perversity in subtle operation within us, which nothing will extinguish but a careful attention to the relative condition of heathen and Christian writers at that period.

27. It is well for this purpose to consider what that is which would have brightened and improved the actual testimony of Tacitus, and made it still more available to the defence of our cause. He evidently writes of the Christians as any cultivated Roman might be naturally expected to do, who felt no great interest and possessed no great information upon the subject. We fancy it would have been better if he had taken a more decided interest, and bequeathed to us by some more satisfying expression, his sense of the importance of the cause; and that it would have been better still had he made himself more fully and distinctly informed, and embodied in his classic pages some more particulars of the gospel history; and best of all, if, attracted by the worth and magnitude of the theme, he had actually journeyed, as other chroniclers have done, among the places and the people where the most authentic records could have been consulted, and the most authentic traditions could have been gathered and appreciated. Let us stop then for a moment at the idea of this last supposition being realized. Let us figure Tacitus on his travels of inquiry; and, conceiving of the result variously, let us try to estimate the influence thereof upon the cause, in whatever way the supposition may be made. First, we may imagine him to have collected in great abundance and strength disproofs of the Christian story, and to have published his refutation of it to the world. This has not been done by Tacitus or any other; and the utter non-existence of any such document in refutation of a religion which provoked so much of resistance—of a document that would have been hailed by thousands who were interested in the overthrow of the gospel, and that would have been transmitted with so much care both by Jews and heathens to succeeding times—the utter non-existence, we say, of any such document is

of itself an incalculable triumph and confirmation to our faith. But secondly, we might imagine that, instead of disproof, he had met with nothing but valid and satisfying credentials on the side of Christianity; and that he had, in an additional book of his annals, incorporated a statistical account of the affairs of Judea, and presented us with the facts of the New Testament, along with all the other facts of his general narrative, as the matters of his historic faith. This, we are apt to imagine, is the best supposable state in which the testimony of a classic and pagan author could come down to us with advantage; and yet we are strongly persuaded that such a phenomenon as this in ancient literature would have engendered a host of surmises and suspicions, that nothing could have allayed. It would have been the testimony, no doubt, of an able and eloquent and now much trusted historian; but it would have been testimony, powerless and paralyzed, by the flagrant evidence which it gave of the insincerity of him who uttered it. How is it possible, it would have been asked, that the pagan Tacitus could, as the result of his close and upright and serious investigation, have verified the truth of all these Christians miracles—yet remained a pagan still? How could he have come into contact with the earnest demands of Christianity for the surrender of the whole man to its high requisitions, and have seen these demands so accompanied and enforced by the hand of Omnipotence—yet refused to be a Christian? There must, it might have been said, there must be a blemish somewhere, that attaches discredit to the whole testimony. How can such testimony help to convince us of the high claims of this religion—when it does not seem to have convinced himself? Why lay so much stress on the record of an historian, who has given no consistent marks whatever of his own faith in his own narrative? Why should we be impressed by a statement which seems no more to have impressed the author of it than would any light or floating rumours that he might have caught, respecting the signs and the prodigies of his own paganism, and which enter, too, into the materials of his history—for the amusement at least, if not the solid information of his readers? After all, can we believe the account he has given to have been the result of grave inquiries terminating in conviction—when not one other evidence of conviction has been rendered by him, than simply the room he has allowed in his record for the miracles of the gospel? What faith can we place in the man who makes so unblushing an exhibition of himself as to pass for authentic



the credentials of this new religion ; and yet, from cowardice, or want of consistency and honour, or something which marks at all events a glaring moral perversity of character, declines to be one of its votaries ? This last question explains why it is that no document of the sort which is so much desiderated could possibly have been transmitted to us. A heathen indisposed to Christianity would not have been at the pains, we may be assured, to collect the proofs of this religion, and then hold them forth in exhibition to the world or to posterity. They could never have been expected to give the sanction of their express testimony to the miracles of the gospel ; and yet, ready as they must have been to gainsay them if they could, and discredit them if they could, they have virtually given to the main circumstances of the evangelical story the most conclusive of all sanctions—the sanction, we mean, of their expressive silence.

28. There only remains then, one conceivable result more from the enterprise that we have imagined for Tacitus. The fruit of his inquiries into the miracles of the gospel might have been, that he was overpowered into the conviction of their truth ; and that, in virtue of the same integrity and moral earnestness by which he was prompted to the inquiry, he was persuaded to become a Christian. Where is the shadow of an argument, why, in consequence of this, his testimony should become less valuable than before ? Is not this the very act or the very transition, at which he makes most emphatic demonstration of the strength and reality of his belief ? Whether, in the name of all reason and common sense, should the testimony of Tacitus continuing in the profession of infidelity, or the testimony of Tacitus embracing the faith and braving martyrdom in the avowal of it, have afforded most conclusive evidence to the truth of the gospel ? Surely that historian only is to be depended on, who tells us as true, that which himself believes to be true ; and by what magical influence then is it that, on the moment he gives the most intense proof of this belief which man can do, by putting life and all its interests to hazard in the attestation of it—at that moment our confidence should fall away from him ? But for this delusion, we must instantly recognise the fact of Tacitus becoming a Christian on inquiry, as that which stamps a hundred-fold worth upon his testimony : and we ought to recollect that it is just this evidence, this enhanced and perfected evidence, multiplied by the number of Christian Fathers in the first century after the death of Christ, that we actually possess. In their



persons, we have twenty Tacituses—whose evidence, though unaccountably weaker in point of impression, were substantially stronger in point of reality—on the supposition of an exchange having been made, from the character of a Roman historian to that of a Christian Father. To an eye of clear and sound intelligence, his testimony were all the brighter by his conversion—yet it would have made no sensible accession to the Christian argument, because lost in the kindred effulgence of a mass of similar testimonies. The light of the purest and highest testimony which Tacitus could have given would have faded away, even from the eye of the Christian, because overborne by the accumulated splendour that already sat on the origin of Christianity: on the eye of the infidel it would have made no impression, who would still have turned him away from the splendour as he does at present, because he hates its beams.

29. Yet though, from the nature of the case, no direct testimony to the Christian miracles from a heathen can be looked for, there are heathen testimonies which form an important accession to the Christian argument. Such are the testimonies to the state of Judea; the testimonies to those numerous particulars in government and customs, which are so often alluded to in the New Testament, and give it the air of an authentic history; and above all, the testimonies to the sufferings of the primitive Christians, from which we learn, through a channel clear of every suspicion, that Christianity, a religion of facts, was the object of persecution at a time when eye-witnesses taught, and eye-witnesses must have bled for it.

30. The silence of Jewish and heathen writers, when the true interpretation is given to it, is all on the side of the Christian argument. Even though the miracles of the gospel had been believed to be true, it is most unlikely that the enemies of the Christian religion would have given their testimony to them; and the absence of this testimony is no impeachment therefore upon the reality of these miracles. But if the miracles of the gospel had been believed to be false, it is most likely that this falsehood would have been asserted by the Jews and heathens of that period; and the circumstance of no such assertion having been given, is a strong argument for the reality of these miracles. Their silence in not asserting the miracles, is perfectly consistent with their truth; but their silence in not denying them, is not at all consistent with their falsehood. The entire silence of Josephus upon the subject of Christianity, though he wrote after

the destruction of Jerusalem, and gives us the history of that period in which Christ and His apostles lived, is certainly a very striking circumstance. The sudden progress of Christianity at that time, and the fame of its miracles (if not the miracles themselves), form an important part of the Jewish history. How came Josephus to abstain from every particular respecting it? Shall we reverse every principle of criticism, and make the silence of Josephus carry it over the positive testimony of the many historical documents which have come down to us? If we should refuse every Christian testimony upon the subject, we surely will not refuse the testimony of Tacitus, who asserts, that this religion spread over Judea, and reached the city of Rome, and was looked upon as an evil of such importance, that it became the object of an authorized persecution by the Roman government; and all this several years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and before Josephus composed his history. Whatever opinion may be formed as to the *truth* of Christianity, certain it is, that its *progress* constituted an object of sufficient magnitude to compel the attention of any historian who undertook the affairs of that period. How then shall we account for the scrupulous and determined exclusion of it from the history of Josephus? Had its miracles been false, this Jewish historian would gladly have exposed them. But its miracles were true; and silence was the only refuge of an antagonist, and his wisest policy.

31. But though we gather no direct testimony from Josephus, yet his history furnishes us with many satisfying additions to the Christian argument. In the details of policy and manners, he coincides in the main with the writers of the New Testament; and these coincidences are so numerous, and have so undesigned an appearance, as to impress on every person, who is at the trouble of making the comparison, the truth of the evangelical story.

32. If we are to look for direct testimonies to the miracles of the New Testament, we must look to that quarter where alone it would be reasonable to expect them,—to the writings of the Christian Fathers, men who were not Jews or heathens at the moment of recording their testimony; but who had been Jews or heathens; and who, in their transition to the ultimate state of Christians, give a stronger evidence of integrity, than if they had believed these miracles, and persisted in a cowardly adherence to the safest profession.

33. We do not undertake to satisfy every demand of the infidel. We think we do enough, if we prove that the thing de-

manded is most unlikely, even though the miracles should be true; and therefore, that the want of it carries no argument against the truth of the miracles. But we do still more than this, if we prove that the testimonies which we actually possess are much stronger than the testimonies he is in quest of. And who can doubt this, when he reflects, that the true way of putting the case betwixt the testimony of the Christian Father, which we do have, and the testimony of Tacitus, which we do not have, is, that the latter would be an assertion not followed up by that conduct which would have been the best evidence of its sincerity; whereas, the former is an assertion substantiated by the whole life, and by the decisive fact of the old profession having been renounced, and the new profession entered into—a change where disgrace, and danger, and martyrdom, were the consequences?

34. Let us, therefore, enter into an examination of these testimonies.

35. This subject has been in part anticipated, when we treated of the authenticity of the books of the New Testament. We have quotations and references to these books from five apostolic Fathers, the companions of the original writers. We have their testimonies sustained and extended by their immediate successors; and, as we pursue this crowded series of testimonies downwards, they become so numerous and so explicit, as to leave no doubt on the mind of the inquirers that the different books of the New Testament are the publication of the authors whose names they bear; and were received by the Christian world as books of authority, from the first period of their appearance.

36. Now, every sentence in a Christian Father, expressive of respect for a book in the New Testament, is also expressive of his faith in its contents. It is equivalent to his testimony for the miracles recorded in it. In the language of the law, it is an act by which he homologates the record, and superinduces his own testimony to that of the original writers. It would be vain to attempt speaking of all these testimonies. It cost the assiduous Lardner many years to collect them. They are exhibited in his "Credibility of the New Testament;" and in the multitude of them, we see a power and a variety of evidence for the Christian miracles which is quite unequalled in the whole compass of ancient history.

37. The characteristic of Lardner is an extreme moderation in argument—that is, he refrains from laying greater stress on



his materials than they will fully and sufficiently bear. His is almost the manner of one who inclines against his own side ; so that should there be anything doubtful in the testimony, instead of taking the advantage to himself, he willingly gives up the whole advantage to his adversary. He thus reduces the bulk of his testimonies ; but, in very proportion to this, does he secure the metallic weight and value of those which remain. He blows away the chaff, as it were, from his argument ; and so brings it within a narrower compass—but all that he preserves is sterling ; and, though he sacrifices much that many of the friends of Christianity would fondly have retained, we feel assured that by this very sacrifice he has not injured but strengthened the cause. His very modesty has made him a more effective advocate than he would otherwise have been ; and any reduction in the multifariousness of the evidence is amply compensated by the well-earned confidence of his readers in the quality, in the thoroughly sifted and ascertained quality, of that which has passed through the ordeal of his searching criticism.

38. He thus stands divested of that which always gives suspiciousness to a cause—the aspect of a special leader, determined to make the most of all that he finds, and set everything off to the greatest advantage. Lardner's way is quite the reverse of this—and he has been blamed by many scholars for an excess of scrupulosity, when he met with evidence which, though of considerable validity in their estimation, he would not admit into his reckoning. The truth is, that he gave to the infidels full advantage of every flaw, wherewith any testimony on the side of the gospel might appear to be vitiated. His in this way is a smaller and shorter summation—but it is all in gold pieces ; and it is done with the air and feeling of a man who can afford to give up the columns of the inferior denominations. There is something very impressive in this consciousness of strength ; and it gives a sense of security in his hands, which we should not feel in listening to the demonstrations of a more strenuous partisan. It is the best possible tactics ; and really, there is no such scarcity of evidence for our faith, as to render it necessary to adopt any other mode of warfare. Whether it be on the general question of Christianity against infidels, or the special question of orthodoxy against heretics, we often find a few valid testimonies in the one case, and a few unquestionable texts in the other, to be decisive of the contest. Instead of extending

our line of defence, we generally do far better to concentrate, and to keep by the impregnable positions of the church militant. For example, though, on perusing the evidence for the miraculous prevention of the attempt by the Emperor Julian to rebuild Jerusalem, we agree in the affirmative sentence of Bishop Warburton—yet we acquiesce in the negative laid upon it by Dr. Lardner.\* We can afford to give it up—even as we can afford to give up the text, “There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one;” for from other texts of undoubted integrity and unquestionable meaning, we feel ourselves completely warranted to address the Saviour of the world as my Lord and my God.

39. But, in addition to testimonies in the gross, for the truth of the evangelical history, have we no distinct testimonies to the individual facts which compose it? We have no doubt of the fact, that Barnabas was acquainted with the Gospel by Matthew,

\* See Warburton's *Julian*. In comparing Lardner on the one hand with Warburton on the other upon this question, it will be found that the preponderance of argumentative force is with the latter. His Julian is one of the ablest and most characteristic of his specimens. For himself, he belongs to a genus nowhere more abundantly exemplified than in the Church of England. We might conceive of erudition apart from strength, as in Lardner—or of strength apart from erudition, as perhaps in Isaac Barrow and Butler, though it was not so much strength as sagacity that formed the characteristic of Butler's mind. But it is the union of both, the native and original vigour along with stores of massive learning—the inherent power conjoined with the extensive scholarship—the momentum and the firm staple of their own independent authorship, along with the achievement of unparalleled reading and research into the authorship of other men—the creative literary power that yielded standard books from themselves, and yet the prodigious industry that enabled them to grapple with whole libraries and to master the books innumerable of the predecessors who had gone before them—it is this combination of vast strength with vast acquisition and labour, that invests, and rightfully invests, with such might and authority, the divines of our sister Establishment. We can imagine learning in feeble and impotent hands to be very inefficient; but when learning is wielded by an arm of strength, then we have a mighty instrument in the hold of a mighty agent; and the execution is irresistible. To encounter a man of great personal and original *vis* is sufficiently formidable; but when to this are superadded the lore and the languages of antiquity, and a vast and various information—the product of the converse of many years with the tomes of other days—then can we perceive an adequate meaning for the epithets bestowed on the most celebrated heroes of the church militant—the irrefragable doctor—the redoubted champion of the faith—the great Goliath of sacred literature—*capax, profundus, eximius homo et venerabilis*. The first name that occurs to us of one who conjoined this original strength with this acquired scholarship is Grotius. But we are speaking now of the Church of England. Cudworth had both. Chillingworth had both. Bryan Walton had both. Stillingfleet had both. Samuel Clarke had both. Warburton had pre-eminently both. The most recent example perhaps is Horsley, who had both. And Samuel Johnson, had he been an ecclesiastic, with the urgent stimulus of a preferment to which he had no other avenue but his works, would, if fairly aroused from his constitutional lethargy, and resolutely set on the road of perseverance, have been a perfect exemplar of both.

and that he subscribed to all the information contained in that history. This is a most valuable testimony from a contemporary writer; and a testimony which embraces all the miracles narrated by the Evangelist. But, in addition to this, we should like if Barnabas, upon his own personal conviction, could assert the reality of any of these miracles. It would be multiplying the original testimonies; for he was a companion and a fellow-labourer of the apostles. We should have been delighted, if, in the course of our researches into the literature of past times, we had met with an authentic record, written by one of the five hundred that are said to have seen our Saviour after His resurrection, and adding his own narrative of this event to the narratives that have already come down to us. Now, is anything of this kind to be met with in ecclesiastical antiquity? How much of this sort of evidence are we in actual possession of? and if we have not enough to satisfy our keen appetite for evidence on a question of such magnitude, how is the want of it to be accounted for?

40. Let it be observed, then, that of the twenty-seven books which make up the New Testament, five are narrative or historical—viz., the four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, which relate to the life and miracles of our Saviour, and the progress of His religion through the world for a good many years after His ascension into heaven. All the rest, with the exception of the Revelation of St. John, are doctrinal or admonitory; and their main object is to explain the principles of the new religion, or to impress its duties upon the numerous proselytes who had, even at that early period, been gained over to the profession of Christianity.

41. Besides what we have in the New Testament, no other professed narrative of the miracles of Christianity has come down to us, bearing the marks of an authentic composition by any apostle, or any contemporary of the apostles. Now, to those who regret this circumstance, we beg leave to submit the following observations. Suppose that one other narrative of the life and miracles of our Saviour had been composed; and, to give all the value to this additional testimony of which it is susceptible, let us suppose it to be the work of an apostle. By this last circumstance, we secure to its uttermost extent the advantage of an original testimony, the testimony of another eye-witness, and constant companion of our Saviour. Now, we ask, what would have been the fate of this performance? It would have been incorporated



into the New Testament along with the other Gospels. It may have been the Gospel according to Philip. It may have been the Gospel according to Bartholomew. At all events, the whole amount of the advantage would have been the substitution of five Gospels instead of four; and this addition, the want of which is so much complained of, would scarcely have been felt by the Christian, or acknowledged by the infidel, to strengthen the evidence of which we are already in possession.

42. But, to vary the supposition, let us suppose that the narrative wanted, instead of being the work of an apostle, had been the work of some other contemporary, who writes upon his own original knowledge of the subject, but was not so closely associated with Christ, or His immediate disciples, as to have his history admitted into the canonical Scriptures. Had this history been preserved, it would have been transmitted to us in a separate state. It would have stood out from among that collection of writings which passes under the general name of the New Testament; and the additional evidence thus afforded would have come down in the form most satisfactory to those with whom we are maintaining our present argument. Yet though, in point of form, the testimony might be more satisfactory; in point of fact, it would be less so. It is the testimony of a less competent witness—a witness who, in the judgment of his contemporaries, wanted those accomplishments which entitled him to a place in the New Testament. There must be some delusion operating upon the understanding, if we think that a circumstance, which renders an historian less accredited in the eyes of his own age, should render him more accredited in the eyes of posterity. Had Mark been kept out of the New Testament, he would have come down to us in that form, which would have made his testimony more impressive to a superficial inquirer; yet there would be no good reason for keeping him out, but precisely that reason which should render his testimony less impressive. We do not complain of this anxiety for more evidence, and as much of it as possible; but it is right to be told that the evidence we have is of far more value than the evidence demanded, and that, in the concurrence of four canonical narratives, we see a far more effectual argument for the miracles of the New Testament, than in any number of those separate and extraneous narratives, the want of which is so much felt, and so much complained of.

43. That the New Testament is not one, but a collection

of many testimonies, is what has been often said, and often acquiesced in. Yet, even after the argument is formally acceded to, its impression is unfelt; and on this subject there is a great and an obstinate delusion, which not only confirms the infidel in his disregard to Christianity, but even veils the strength of the evidence from its warmest admirers.

44. There is a difference betwixt a mere narrative and a work of speculation or morality. The latter subjects embrace a wider range, admit a great variety of illustration, and are quite endless in their application to the new cases that occur in the ever-changing history of human affairs. The subject of a narrative again admits of being exhausted. It is limited by the number of actual events. True, we may expatiate upon the character or importance of these events; but in so doing, we drop the office of the pure historian, for that of the politician, or the moralist, or the divine. The Evangelists give us a very chaste and perfect example of the pure narrative. They never appear in their own persons, or arrest the progress of the history for a single moment, by interposing their own wisdom, or their own piety. A Gospel is a bare relation of what has been said or done; and it is evident that, after a few good compositions of this kind, any future attempts would be superfluous and uncalled for.

45. But, in point of fact, these attempts were made. It is to be supposed that, after the singular events of our Saviour's history, the curiosity of the public would be awakened, and there would be a demand for written accounts of such wonderful transactions. These written accounts were accordingly brought forward. Even in the interval of time betwixt the ascension of our Saviour, and the publication of the earliest Gospel, such written histories seem to have been frequent. "Many," says St. Luke (and in this he is supported by the testimony of subsequent writers), "have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of these things." Now what has been the fate of all these performances? Such as might have been anticipated. They fell into disuse and oblivion. There is no evil design ascribed to the authors of them. They may have been written with perfect integrity, and been useful for a short time, and within a limited circle; but, as was natural, they all gave way to the superior authority and more complete information of our present narratives. The demand of the Christian world was withdrawn from the less esteemed to the more esteemed histories of our Saviour. The former ceased to be read, and copies of

them would be no longer transcribed or multiplied. We cannot find the testimony we are in quest of; not because it was never given, but because the early Christians, who were the most competent judges of that testimony, did not think it worthy of being transmitted to us.

46. But though the number of narratives be necessarily limited by the nature of the subject, there is no such limitation upon works of a moral, didactic, or explanatory kind. Many such pieces have come down to us, both from the apostles themselves, and from the earlier Fathers of the church. Now, though the object of these compositions is not to deliver any narrative of the Christian miracles, they may perhaps give us some occasional intimation of them. They may proceed upon their reality. We may gather either from incidental passages, or from the general scope of the performance, that the miracles of Christ and His apostles were recognised, and the divinity of our religion acknowledged, as founded upon these miracles.

47. The first piece of the kind which we meet with, besides the writings of the New Testament, is an epistle ascribed to Barnabas, and, at all events, the production of a man who lived in the days of the apostles. It consists of an exhortation to constancy in the Christian profession, a dissuasive from Judaism, and other moral instructions. We shall only give a quotation of a single clause from this work:—"And he (*i.e.* our Saviour), making great signs and prodigies to the people of the Jews, they neither believed nor loved him."

48. The next piece in the succession of Christian writers, is the undoubted epistle of Clement, the Bishop of Rome, to the church of Corinth; and who, by the concurrent voice of all antiquity, is the same Clement who is mentioned in the Epistle to the Philippians, as the fellow-labourer of Paul. It is written in the name of the church of Rome; and the object of it is to compose certain dissensions which had arisen in the church of Corinth. It was out of his way to enter into anything like a formal narrative of the miraculous facts which are to be found in the evangelical history. The subject of his epistle did not lead him to this; and besides, the number and authority of the narratives already published, rendered an attempt of this kind altogether superfluous. Still, however, though a miracle may not be formally announced, it may be brought in incidentally, or it may be proceeded upon, or assumed as the basis of an argument. We give one or two examples of this. In one part of his epistle,



he illustrates the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, by the change and progression of natural appearances, and he ushers in this illustration with the following sentence:—"Let us consider, my beloved, how the Lord shows us our future resurrection perpetually, of which he made the Lord Jesus Christ the first-fruits, by raising him from the dead." This incidental way of bringing in the fact of our Lord's resurrection, appears to us the strongest possible form in which the testimony of Clement could have come down to us. It is brought forward in the most confident and unembarrassed manner. He does not stop to confirm this fact by any strong asseveration; nor does he carry, in his manner of announcing it, the most remote suspicion of its being resisted by the incredulity of those to whom he is addressing himself. It wears the air of an acknowledged truth; a thing understood and acquiesced in by all the parties in this correspondence. The direct narrative of the Evangelists gives us their original testimony to the miracles of the gospel. The artless and indirect allusions of the apostolic Fathers, give us not merely their faith in this testimony, but the faith of the whole societies to which they write. They let us see, not merely that such a testimony was given, but that such a testimony was generally believed, and that, too, at a time when the facts in question lay within the memory of living witnesses.

49. In another part, speaking of the apostles, Clement says, that "receiving the commandments, and being filled with full certainty by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and confirmed by the word of God, with the assurance of the Holy Spirit, they went out announcing the advent of the kingdom of God."

50. It was no object, in those days, for a Christian writer to come over the miracles of the New Testament, with the view of lending his formal and explicit testimony to them. This testimony had already been completed to the satisfaction of the whole Christian world. If much additional testimony has not been given, it is because it was not called for. But we ought to see that every Christian writer, in the fact of his being a Christian, in his expressed reverence for the books of the New Testament, and in his numerous allusions to the leading points of the gospel history, has given as satisfying evidence to the truth of the Christian miracles, as if he had left behind him a copious and distinct narrative.

51. Of all the miracles of the gospel, it was to be supposed that the resurrection of our Saviour would be oftenest appealed

to; not as an evidence of his being a Divine teacher—for that was a point so settled in the mind of every Christian, that a written exposition of the argument was no longer necessary—but as a motive to constancy in the Christian profession, and as the great pillar of hope in our own immortality. We accordingly meet with the most free and confident allusions to this fact in the early Fathers. We meet with five intimations of this fact in the undoubted epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians: a Father who had been educated by the apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ.

52. It is quite unnecessary to exhibit passages from the epistles of Ignatius to the same effect, or to pursue the examination downwards through the series of written testimonies. It is enough to announce it as a general fact that, in the very first age of the Christian Church, the teachers of this religion proceeded as confidently upon the reality of Christ's miracles and resurrection, in their addresses to the people, as the teachers of the present day: or, in other words, that they were as little afraid of being resisted by the incredulity of the people, at a time when the evidence of the facts was accessible to all, and habit and prejudice were against them, as we are of being resisted by the incredulity of an unlettered multitude, who listen to us with all the veneration of a hereditary faith.

53. There are five apostolic Fathers, and a series of Christian writers who follow after them in rapid succession. To give an idea to those who are not conversant in the study of ecclesiastical antiquities, how well sustained the chain of testimony is from the first age of Christianity, we shall give a passage from a letter of Irenæus, preserved by Eusebius. We have no less than nine compositions, from different authors, which fill up the interval betwixt him and Polycarp; and yet this is the way in which he speaks, in his old age, of the venerable Polycarp, in a letter to Florinus: "I saw you, when I was very young, in the Lower Asia, with Polycarp. For I better remember the affairs of that time than those which have lately happened: the things which we learn in our childhood growing up in the soul, and uniting themselves to it. Insomuch, that I can tell the place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, and his going out and coming in, and the manner of his life, and the form of his person, and his discourses to the people; and how he related his conversation with John, and others who had seen the Lord; and how he related their sayings, and what he had heard from them con-

cerning the Lord, both concerning His miracles and His doctrines, as he had received them from the eye-witnesses of the Word of Life; all which Polycarp related agreeably to the Scriptures. These things I then, through the mercy of God toward me, diligently heard and attended to, recording them not on paper, but upon my heart."

54. We shall pursue this descending series of testimonies no further at present; but it is of importance to remark that the number of actually written testimonies, and of a highly authentic and authoritative character too, by which the facts of the gospel narrative have been handed onward from one generation to another in the history of the Christian Church, greatly exceeds the number of those testimonies which have been preserved to the present day. We are not to infer, from the loss and disappearance of many old works, that they were either useless in point of matter, or were devoid of literary worth in point of genius and execution. They may have been in great esteem and great request—both immediately after the time of their appearance, and for some succeeding generations. They may have served a most important purpose by their publication; and, instead of perishing because of their slender or inferior merit, they may have suffered this fate for the very reason why in the present day some of the best and highest works of the land are now perishing from the memory of the existent generation. How few, for example, are there now-a-days, who read the best English writers of two centuries ago! To come further down, how little the most distinguished British classics at the beginning of the last century are now inquired after! We are not sure if new editions of the *Spectator* or the *Tatler* or the *Guardian* would prove very safe speculations—and this, not because their beauties would not still be relished if only read, but because they are really thrown back, as it were, from the very eyesight of the present age by the prodigious mass of more recent and intermediate authorship which now screens them from our own view, and which have really placed in the background those who were the great masters of taste and criticism in the days of our grandfathers. Such is the perishable nature of literary fame; and that, from the absolute impossibility of reading our way through those authors of more pungent interest who have but recently poured their effusions on the world—to those models of a former age who sat on thrones of literature in the eye of their contemporaries; and still deserve, if there was time for it, to be as



much studied and admired as ever. It is thus that the great poets of a hundred or a hundred and fifty years back are fast vanishing from public observation. The world is wearing out of acquaintance with them. They are falling, not into disesteem; but they are falling into desuetude. Pope, for example, is almost never heard of. We fear that Milton's *Paradise Lost* is not nearly so much read as it deserves to be. Thomson's *Seasons*, every paragraph of which is so replete with descriptive power, and who is ever faithful to the truth and the likeness of nature, even when he throws the richest flush of poetry over it—seems to be almost as much forgotten as those buckram pastorals where Corydon and Amaryllis hold converse in cold, though classic phrase; and whose imitations of Greece and Rome are as unlike to anything that is animated by the freshness of living sentiment, as the mummies of Egypt are unlike to the men and women of our existing society. These great writers are going into rapid oblivion, not because they have been outdone by their successors, but because their successors have taken up the room which themselves occupied, and so have shut them out from the stage of public observation. They are occasionally read of in the writings of their successors; but they are not read. We know them to have been of first-rate eminence; but we scarcely know this at first-hand. We catch it by a second or third echo from later authors—in whose pages, however, we observe them mentioned and referred to as the colossal men of their day.

55. Now this principle admits of the strongest application to the case before us. Quadratus, the first apologist we know of for Christianity, was shut out by the writers who succeeded him—by Justin Martyr, and Tertullian, and Origen, and Eusebius, and Chrysostom, and Jerome, and Augustine. He still lives, it is true; but he lives only in the collections or extracts of one of his followers. He may have been illustrious in his day; and yet in a century or two may have fallen into disuse, not in consequence of any discredit that he had incurred, but simply by an act of dispossession. The authors who came after stood between him and the readers of a future age; and they multiplied beyond the demand and even the power of many to peruse them—so as to accumulate a literature that became too much for the means of any student to overtake. In these circumstances, many authors, and valuable ones too, were unavoidably superseded. For the cause now referred to bears a far more emphatic application to

the authors of that period than to those of the present day—when, on the one hand, books were expensive and would not be purchased beyond the more urgent needs of those who made use of them; and on the other hand, the operose manufacture, not of printing but of copying by the pen, would not be undertaken for the production of an article that after all was found to be unsaleable. In such a state of things, there is no saying what luminaries may have been extinguished along the track of ages—what men of power and of achievement in their day may have now been utterly lost sight of—what proud literary honours may now be lying prostrate in forgetfulness—what authors who have enjoyed their little hour, not of meretricious but of solid and well-earned celebrity, whose works and even whose names have long perished from the memory of the world. It is affecting to view such a termination for that highest of all human greatness—the greatness of mind, and of the mind's performances. When we see how precarious that immortality is which is the boasted reward of genius, the ambition of a name in literature might well die within the breast. It should give place to that higher ambition which prompts man to seek after a real and not a fancied immortality. But we cannot afford at present to expatiate on the moral of this contemplation. Our immediate object is to illustrate a principle which has not been much adverted to, though it serves to explain a phenomenon in the history of books and the history of literature—exemplified among writers of all sorts, and among none more than those who have signalized themselves in their day in the defence or illustration of the Christian faith. It is a principle which will serve to account for the destruction of much that is precious, as well as of much that is worthless, in authorship.\*

\* The following extract from the "Edinburgh Review" for March 1819, is, we believe, the production of the masterly pen of Francis Jeffrey:—

"Next to the impression of the vast fertility, compass, and beauty of our English poetry, the reflection that recurs most frequently and forcibly to us in accompanying Mr. C. through his wide survey, is that of the perishable nature of poetical fame, and the speedy oblivion that has overtaken so many of the promised heirs of immortality. Of near two hundred and fifty authors, whose works are cited in these volumes, by far the greatest part of whom were celebrated in their generation, there are not thirty who now enjoy anything that can be called popularity—whose works are to be found in the hands of ordinary readers—in the shops of ordinary booksellers—or in the press for publication. About fifty more may be tolerably familiar to men of taste or literature;—the rest slumber on the shelves of collectors, and are partially known to a few antiquaries and scholars. Now, the fame of a poet is popular, or nothing. He does not address himself, like the man of science, to the learned, or those who desire to learn, but to all mankind; and his purpose being to delight and be

56. Now is the time to exhibit to full advantage the argument which the different epistles of the New Testament afford. They are, in fact, so many distinct and additional testimonies. If the testimonies drawn from the writings of the Christian Fathers are calculated to make any impression, then the testimonies of these epistles, where there is no delusion and no prejudice in the mind of the inquirer, must make a greater impression. They are more ancient, and were held to be of greater authority by competent judges. They were held sufficient by the men of those days, who were nearer to the sources of evidence; and they ought, therefore, to be held sufficient by us. The early persecuted Christians had too great an interest in the grounds of their faith to make a light and superficial examination. We may safely commit the decision to them; and the decision they have made is, that the authors of the different epistles in the New Testament, were worthier of their confidence, as witnesses of the truth, than the authors of those compositions which were left out of the collection, and maintain, in our eye, the form of a separate testi-

praised, necessarily extends to all who can receive pleasure, or join in applause. It is strange, and somewhat humiliating, to see how great a proportion of those who had once fought their way successfully to distinction, and surmounted the rivalry of contemporary envy, have again sunk into neglect. We have great deference for public opinion; and readily admit, that nothing but what is good can be permanently popular. But though its *vivat* be generally oracular, its *percat* appears to us to be often sufficiently capricious; and while we would foster all that it bids to live, we would willingly revive much that it leaves to die. The very multiplication of works of amusement necessarily withdraws many from notice that deserve to be kept in remembrance; for we should soon find it labour, and not amusement, if we were obliged to make use of them all, or even to take all upon trial. As the materials of enjoyment and instruction accumulate around us, more and more must thus be daily rejected, and left to waste: for while our tasks lengthen, our lives remain as short as ever; and the calls on our time multiply, while our time itself is flying swiftly away. This superfluity and abundance of our treasures, therefore, necessarily renders much of them worthless; and the veriest accidents may, in such a case, determine what part shall be preserved, and what thrown away and neglected. When an army is *decimated*, the very bravest may fall; and many poets, worthy of eternal remembrance, have been forgotten, merely because there was not room in our memories for all.

“By such a work as the present, however, this injustice of fortune may be partly redressed—some small fragments of an immortal strain may still be rescued from oblivion—and a wreck of a name preserved, which time appeared to have swallowed up for ever. There is something pious, we think, and endearing, in the office of thus gathering up the ashes of renown that has passed away: or rather, of calling back the departed life for a transitory glow, and enabling those great spirits which seemed to be *laid* for ever, still to draw a tear of pity, or a throb of admiration, from the hearts of a forgetful generation. The body of their poetry, probably, can never be revived; but some sparks of its spirit may yet be preserved in a narrower and feebler frame.

“When we look back upon the havoc which two hundred years have thus made in the ranks of our immortals—and, above all, when we refer their rapid appearance to the quick



mony. By what unaccountable tendency is it, that we feel disposed to reverse this decision, and to repose more faith in the testimony of subsequent and less esteemed writers? Is there anything in the confidence given to Peter and Paul by their contemporaries, which renders them unworthy of ours? or, is the testimony of their writings less valuable and less impressive, because the Christians of old have received them as the best vouchers of their faith?

57. It gives us a far more satisfying impression than ever of the truth of our religion, when, in addition to several distinct and independent narratives of its history, we meet with a number of contemporaneous productions addressed to different societies, and all proceeding upon the truth of that history, as an agreed and unquestionable point amongst the different parties in the correspondence. Had that history been a fabrication, in what manner, we ask, would it have been followed up by the subsequent compositions of those numerous agents in the work of deception? How comes it that they have betrayed no symptom

succession of new competitors, and the accumulation of more good works than there is time to peruse—we cannot help being dismayed at the prospect which lies before the writers of the present day. There never was an age so prolific of popular poetry as that in which we now live; and as wealth, population, and education extend, the produce is likely to go on increasing. The last ten years have produced, we think, an annual supply of about ten thousand lines of good staple poetry—poetry from the very first hands that we can boast of—that runs quickly to three or four large editions—and is as likely to be permanent as present success can make it. Now, if this goes on for a hundred years longer, what a task will await the poetical readers of 1919! Our living poets will then be nearly as old as Pope and Swift are at present—but there will stand between them and that generation nearly ten times as much fresh and fashionable poetry as is now interposed between us and those writers;—and if Scott, and Byron, and Campbell have already cast Pope and Swift a good deal into the shade, in what form and dimensions are they themselves likely to be presented to the eyes of their great-grandchildren? The thought, we own, is a little appalling; and we confess we see nothing better to imagine than that they may find a comfortable place in some new collection of specimens—the centenary of the present publication. There—if the future editor have anything like the indulgence and veneration for antiquity of his predecessor—there shall posterity still hang with rapture on the half of Campbell—and the fourth part of Byron—and the sixth of Scott—and the scattered tithes of Crabbe—and the three *per cent.* of Southey,—while some good-natured critic shall sit in our mouldering chair, and more than half prefer them to those by whom they have been superseded! It is a hyperbole of good-nature, however, we fear, to ascribe to them even these dimensions of the end of a century. After a lapse of two hundred and fifty years, we are afraid to think of the space they may have shrunk into. We have no Shakspeare, alas! to shed a never-setting light on his contemporaries; and if we continue to write and to rhyme at the present rate for two hundred years longer, there must be some new art of short-hand reading invented, or all reading will be given up in despair. We need not distress ourselves, however, with these afflictions of our posterity; and it is quite time that the reader should know a little of the work before us.”

of that insecurity which it would have been so natural to feel in their circumstances? Through the whole of these epistles, we see nothing like the awkward or embarrassed air of impostors. We see no anxiety, either to mend or to confirm the history that had already been given. We see no contest which they might have been called upon to maintain with the incredulity of their converts, as to the miracles of the gospel. We see the most intrepid remonstrance against errors of conduct, or discipline, or doctrine. This savours strongly of upright and independent teachers. But is it not a most striking circumstance, that, amongst the severe reckonings which St. Paul had with some of his churches, he was never once called upon to school their doubts, or their suspicions, as to the reality of the Christian miracles? This is a point universally acquiesced in; and, from the general strain of these epistles, we collect, not merely the testimony of their authors, but the unsuspected testimony of all to whom they addressed themselves.

58. And let it never be forgotten, that the Christians who composed these churches, were in every way well qualified to be arbiters in this question. They had the first authorities within their reach. The five hundred who, Paul says to them, had seen our Saviour after His resurrection, could be sought after; and, if not to be found, Paul would have had his assertion to answer for. In some cases, they were the first authorities themselves, and had therefore no confirmation to go in search of. He appeals to the miracles which had been wrought among them, and in this way he commits the question to their own experience. He asserts this to the Galatians; and at the very time, too, that he is delivering against them a most severe and irritating invective. He intimates the same thing repeatedly to the Corinthians; and after he had put his honesty to so severe a trial, does he betray any insecurity as to his character and reputation amongst them? So far from this, in arguing the general doctrine of the resurrection from the dead as the most effectual method of securing assent to it, he rests the main part of the argument upon their confidence in his fidelity as a witness. "But if there be no resurrection from the dead, then is Christ not risen—yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." Where, we ask, would have been the mighty charm of this argument, if Paul's fidelity had been questioned? and how shall we account for the free and intrepid

manner in which he advances it, if the miracles which he refers to, as wrought among them, had been nullities of his own invention?

59. For the truth of the gospel history, we can appeal to one strong and unbroken series of testimonies from the days of the apostles. But the great strength of the evidence lies in that effulgence of testimony, which enlightens this history at its commencement—in the number of its original witnesses—in the distinct and independent records which they left behind them—and in the undoubted faith they bore among the numerous societies which they instituted. The concurrence of the apostolic Fathers, and their immediate successors, forms a very strong and a very satisfying argument; but let it be further remembered, that out of the materials which compose, if we may be allowed the expression, the original charter of our faith, we can select a stronger body of evidence than it is possible to form out of the whole mass of subsequent testimonies.

60. Before closing our account of the testimony of subsequent witnesses, we would advert shortly to the strong virtual though unwritten testimony that is implied in the consent of the many thousands of converts to the faith of the gospel, and the unquestioned oral tradition by which the history of its origin was handed forward from one generation to another. This evidence afforded by the ancient people of the Church, is altogether distinct and additional to that which we gather from the Fathers of the Church. When one ancient author witnesses for another; and is himself nearly as remote from the age in which we live, he too is generally propped or supported by succeeding testimonies, even as his predecessor—and thus it is, that each, in the train of some one that went before him, is also himself followed by a train of those who came after him. There is in this way a broad and magnificent stream of light from the New Testament Scriptures to the present age—made up of all those separate lines of light which issue from each of the individual witnesses—a chain of evidence, in which each writer adds, as it were, a fibre of his own, and contributes a portion to the bulk and strength of the whole—a crowd of reporters along the pathway of descending ages, who stand in such close and continuous succession, that each is in full hearing of his neighbour's voice and can transmit in turn his own credible testimony to those who occupy the place beneath him in the ladder of history. There is no other instance of such a sustained and solid conveyance, as that by which the facts of



the Christian story have travelled downwards to the present hour—nor can any profane author be named who hath come to us along the track of centuries, by such numerous and such firm stepping-stones. It were interesting to be presented with comparative tabellated views upon this subject—to have a series of all the notices which can be collected from all authors before the age of printing, to the writings of Cæsar or Cicero, and reckon them along with a similar series of notices to the writings of the Evangelists or of St. Paul. On every principle of what is deemed to be sound criticism, when estimating the genuineness of ancient compositions in ordinary literature, would it be found that the sacred outweigh the profane authors a hundred-fold; and when one thinks of the unhesitating faith that is reposed, both in the existence of those Roman personages whom we have just named, and in the general authenticity of their writings—one cannot but wonder at the lingering incredulity, and at length the slow assent, even of the friends of Christianity, in the veracity of the New Testament, and the trustworthiness of the innumerable depositions, bearing every mark of honesty, which can be alleged in its favour.

61. But this written testimony is very far from being all which can be appealed to for the truth of the gospel narrative. We speak not of the very peculiar circumstances, under which the written testimony of apostolic men and of Christian Fathers was given; and how they sealed their integrity by their sufferings in the cause: but, apart from all written evidence whatever, we should think on the evidence of that uncontrolled oral tradition which is nearly all that can be alleged for some of the most esteemed authors of antiquity. When Cicero wrote, there could be no mistake either as to the works or as to their author at the time of the publication; and, apart from any other taking up the pen and transmitting a written voucher in their behalf, we can easily imagine that they would be handed to the immediately succeeding generation, as the undoubted compositions of the man whose name was prefixed to them, and whom every one knew to have been great in talent, and great in the public and political history of his times. That generation might have received them as they got them, and handed them onward on the same terms to their immediate posterity. And thus, independently of other authors, they might have been carried forward on a stream of unquestioned tradition, never contradicted and never doubted—and so coming down to us in the undisturbed

possession of a hereditary esteem which of itself, and more especially when accompanied by the internal marks of credibility in the subject-matter of the volumes, would perpetuate the credit of them, and so as that we should never think of inquiring about the testimony either of contemporary or intermediate writers. Independently of all written documents, there is a vast deal of information carried forward on the vehicle of an uninterrupted hearsay; and who can doubt that the various pieces of the New Testament had this sort of tradition to help on their conveyance from generation to generation? That is a remarkable testimony of Irenæus, when he says, "That the tradition of the apostles hath spread itself over the whole universe; and all they who search after the sources of truth will find this tradition to be held sacred in every church. We might enumerate all those who have been appointed bishops to these churches by the apostles, and all their successors up to our days. It is by this uninterrupted succession that we have received the tradition which actually exists in the church, as also the doctrines of truth as it was preached by the apostles." Superadded, then, to the copious written testimony which has been collected by Lardner, there is a virtual and most effective testimony in the oral conveyance of historical truth from one age to another; and for the integrity of which, we have the best guarantees in the tradition of the early Christians. This tradition, in fact, is tantamount to the testimony of whole multitudes who had no possible interest either in deceiving or in being deceived; and with whom the authority of those Scriptures, on the faith of which they embarked all their hopes in eternity, and braved the most fearful hazards in time, was a prime concern. Never, we may rest assured, did the stream of tradition flow purer than through those ages of a suffering and persecuted church, which lay between the commencement of our religion and its establishment in the days of Constantine. In support of the Scriptures, there is a continuous and increasing light of written testimony, far surpassing all that can be adduced in behalf of any ancient authors; but a reflecting mind will acknowledge that in the oral tradition of a sincere, and suffering, and vigilant people, there is a chain of still closer and firmer continuity. And when one thinks of so many separate and diverging chains, throughout the various churches of the world—yet all landing in the harmonious result of the same Scriptures as the rule of our faith and practice—it affords a multiplicity of evidence, not only for the age and



authority of these books, but for the certainty of their informations, which is altogether unexampled.

62. Nor should we here omit another species of testimony which, though also unwritten and inarticulate, affords a powerful evidence on the side of revelation. We refer to the credibility which the institutions of the Jewish and Christian religions impart to the origin of both. This has been well unfolded in that admirable little tract, intitled Leslie's "Short and Easy Method with the Deists"—in which, by means of a plain yet most effective argument that is exceedingly well put, he embodies as it were the faith of past history in certain observances that are acted before our eyes. He in the first place exhibits with great force, how impossible it is that the faith of contemporaries could be carried, in any miraculous if pretended facts said to have been performed in the midst of them, and if of such a nature as that many must have seen and all must have heard of them. And in the second place, he demonstrates with equal force, how impossible it were to carry the faith of their descendants in any age after them, in the genuineness of any memorials said to have been instituted in the celebration of these miraculous events immediately after they happened—but in fact newly instituted, with the view to palm a false history on the credulity of the public. The Jewish passover, for example, is said to have been instituted in commemoration of that awful miracle, the death in one night of all the first-born in the land of Egypt; and at a time when the event, if true, must have been fresh in the recollection of all the children of Israel. The argument of Leslie goes most satisfactorily to show, that if the miracle was not true, and the passover was not instituted at the time of its having taken place—then it was just as impossible to introduce it at any future age in connexion with the story, as to make the story itself be believed in the age when it was alleged to have happened. So that this established rite, this great annual solemnity, transmitted from generation to generation, becomes a permanent witness for the truth of the circumstances in which it is said to have originated. And, tracing the history of this observation upwards, we can stop at no point later than the miraculous story which it authenticates, at which it would have been possible to have gained for it the credit and consent of the Jewish people: and, when we do attain this summit, when we thus carry back the institution close to the great event which it professes to commemorate—we then meet with the equal impossibility of



forcing their acceptance of the institution, without their previous belief and acceptance of the story; or lastly, of forcing that belief, without a story, of so palpable and public a nature, being actually true.\*

63. He applies this argument with great effect to Christianity, which has its Sabbath, and its standing ministry and its Baptism and its Sacrament of the Supper—all of them coeval with itself; and the last of them especially commemorative, not merely of the death of our Saviour, but, in the words by which we are enjoined to “do this till he come again,” commemorative also of his resurrection. The annual celebrations of this solemnity may be regarded, then, as the stepping-stones by which the tradition of this great miracle has descended on sure footing from the first age of the gospel to the time in which we live. It has moved downward for nearly two thousand years on a solid pathway—handed from one to another, in a progression that could not possibly have commenced later than the age of the apostles; and could not possibly have commenced then, without the general faith of a persecuted and therefore a pure and an upright church, in an event about which it was impossible to deceive them.

\* The rules applied by Leslie to this investigation are the four following:—“1st, That the matter of fact be such that men’s outward senses, their eyes and ears, may be judges of it. 2d, That it be done publicly in the face of the world. 3d, That not only public monuments be kept up in memory of it, but some outward actions be performed. 4th, That such monuments, or such actions and observances as be instituted, do commence from the time that the matter of fact was done.

“The two first rules make it impossible for any such matter of fact to be imposed upon men at the time when such matter of fact was said to be done; because every man’s eyes and senses would contradict it.

“Therefore it only remains that such matter of fact might be invented some time after, when the men of that generation wherein the thing was said to be done are all past and gone, and the credulity of after ages might be imposed upon to believe that things were done in former ages which were not.

“And for this the two last rules secure us as much as the two first rules in the former case.”

He applies these rules with great good effect to the histories both of Moses and Christ. The chief Jewish memorials which he notices are the Feast of the Passover—Aaron’s Rod—the Pot of Manna—the Brazen Serpent—the Feast of Pentecost—the Sabbath—the Sacrifices—the Feasts and Fasts in general—the tribe of Levi—the stones at Gilgal.

His treatment of the last of these memorials may be given as a fair specimen of his whole argument.

“Now to frame our argument, let us suppose, that there never was any such thing as that passage over Jordan—that these things at Gilgal were set up upon some other occasion in some after age—and then that some designing man invented this book of Joshua, and said that it was writ by Joshua at that time, and gave this stoneage at Gilgal for a testimony of the truth of it—would not everybody say to him, We know this stoneage at Gilgal, but we never heard before of this reason for it, nor of this book of Joshua. Where has it been all

## CHAPTER VI.

ON THE SECURE AND IMPREGNABLE CHARACTER OF THE HISTORICAL  
ARGUMENT FOR THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. IF there be one thing more distinctive of all that is sound in our modern philosophy than another, it is the respect which it maintains throughout for the evidence of observation. Now the original witnesses of the gospel had the evidence of observation for the truth of its recorded miracles. And to us of the present day, it comes in the shape of observation at second-hand—coming as it does through the medium of a testimony altogether unexampled in strength and sureness. The office of history is to inform us, not of that which has fallen under the observation of our own senses, but of that which has fallen under the observation of the senses of other men—and, if only transmitted to us by a sure pathway, then, though it may be termed derivative rather than direct or primary observation, yet may it claim the same rightful authority over all that is of a conjectural character, which is now allowed at all hands to the evidence of facts over the gratuitous fancies of theory or speculation. And it does give a more entire character of purely observational evidence to the evidence of testimony, that beside reporting to us the observation of others, it is upon observation of our own, upon the experience we have had of the characters of truth and

this while? And where and how came you after so many ages to find it? Besides, this book tells us that this passage over Jordan was ordained to be taught our children from age to age; and therefore that they were always to be instructed in the meaning of that stoneage at Gilgal as a memorial of it. But we were never taught it when we were children, nor did we ever teach our children any such thing; and it is not likely that thing could have been forgotten, while so remarkable a stoneage did continue which was set up for that and no other end.

“The matters of fact of Mahomet, or what is fabled of the heathen deities, do all want some of the aforesaid rules, whereby the certainty of matters of fact is demonstrated.

“I do not say that everything which wants these four marks is false; but that nothing can be false which has them all.”

The Essay altogether is terse and powerful, and one of the happiest specimens in existence of good wholesome English argument.

There are certain other material vestiges of the truth of Revelation, by the investigation of which we should break up a new and a rich mine of evidence in its favour. We refer to coins and medals, and architectural monuments, confirmatory of the Jewish and Christian histories, and more especially of the facts connected with the origin of the latter dispensation.

falsehood in other men, that we immediately pass our judgment on the credibility of any narrative which may happen to be submitted to us. This is one good effect of proving the faith of testimony to be resolvable into the faith of experience. It gives, out and out, to the evidence for the miracles of the gospel, the character of a solid experimental and Baconian evidence—and as much superior to the hypothetical imaginations which have been opposed to it, as are the certainties of that *terra firma* which is within the circle of observation, to the plausibilities however ingenious of that *terra incognita* which is around it.

2. After having attained this secure vantage-ground, we have only to make a right use of its capabilities in order to disperse certain phantoms which infidelity has conjured up from a dim and inaccessible region. Perhaps the two most notable examples of this are—first, the presumption on which the enemies of revelation have attempted to discredit it, because of its imagined incongruity with their geological speculations; second, the presumption on which a similar attempt has been made, because of the imagined incongruity between the Theology of the Bible and the Theology of Nature. The one presumption is fetched from a distant antiquity, and supposes an acquaintance with the secrets of a physical history that no human spectator witnessed, and of which no human record has been transmitted to us. The other presumption is fetched from an obscurity profounder still, and supposes an acquaintance with the mysteries of the spiritual world of which the duration reaches from eternity to eternity; and which besides, as much surpasses the audacity of the former presumption, as the dimensions of our single earth are surpassed by the dimensions of the universe. Meanwhile we have a stable historical, or, which is really tantamount to this, a stable observational evidence for the miracles of the New Testament; and it only remains to be shown, how this enables us to stand our ground against sceptical geologists on the one hand, and sceptical theists on the other.

3.—I. There are certain late speculations in geology which give the example of a distant and unconnected circumstance, being suffered to cast an unmerited disgrace over the whole of our argument. They give a higher antiquity to the world than most of those who read the Bible had any conception of. Admit this antiquity; and in what possible way does it touch upon the historical evidence for the New Testament? The credibility of the gospel miracles stands upon its own appropriate foundation,



the recorded testimony of numerous and unexceptionable witnesses. The only way in which we can overthrow that credibility is by attacking the testimony or disproving the authenticity of the record. Every other science is tried upon its own peculiar evidences: and all we contend for is, that the same justice be done to theology. When a mathematician offers to apply his reasoning to the phenomena of mind, the votaries of moral science resent it as an invasion, and make their appeal to the evidence of consciousness. When an amateur of botany, upon some vague analogies, offers his confident affirmations as to the structure and parts of the human body, there would be an instantaneous appeal to the knife and demonstrations of the anatomist. Should a mineralogist, upon the exhibition of an ingenious or well-supported theory, pronounce upon the history of our Saviour and His miracles, we should call it another example of an arbitrary and unphilosophical extension of principles beyond the field of their legitimate application. We should appeal to the kind and the quantity of testimony upon which that history is supported. We might suffer ourselves to be delighted by the brilliancy, or even convinced by the evidence of his speculations; but we should feel, that the history of those facts which form the groundwork of our faith, is as little affected by them as the history of any storm or battle or warrior which has come down to us in the most genuine and approved records of past ages.

4. But whatever be the external evidence of testimony, or however strong may be its visible characters of truth and honesty, is not the falsehood or the contradiction which we may detect in the subject of that testimony sufficient to discredit it? Had we been original spectators of our Saviour's miracles, we must have had as strong a conviction of their reality as it is in the power of testimony to give us. Had we been the eye-witnesses of his character and history, and caught from actual observation the impression of his worth—the internal proofs, that no jugglery or falsehood could have been intended, would have been certainly as strong as the internal proofs which are now exhibited to us, and which consist in the simplicity of the narrative, and that tone of perfect honesty which pervades, in a manner so distinct and intelligible, every composition of the apostles. Yet, with all these advantages, if Jesus Christ had asserted as a truth, what we confidently knew to be a falsehood; had he, for example, upon the strength of his prophetic endowments, pronounced upon the secret of a person's age, and told

us that he was thirty when we knew him to be forty, would not this have made us stumble at all his pretensions, and, in spite of every other argument and appearance, would we not have withdrawn our confidence from him as a teacher from God? This, we allow, would have been a most serious dilemma. It would have been that state of neutrality which admits of nothing positive or satisfying on either side of the question; or rather what is still more distressing, which gives us the most positive and satisfactory appearances on both sides. We could not abandon the truth of the miracles, because we saw them. Could we give them up, we should determine on a positive rejection, and our minds would feel repose in absolute infidelity. But as the case stands, it is scepticism. There is nothing like it in any other department of inquiry. We can appeal to no actual example; but a student of natural science may be made to understand the puzzle, when we ask him how he would act, if the experiments which he conducts under the most perfect sameness of circumstances, were to land him in opposite results? He would vary and repeat his experiments; he would try to detect the inconsistency; and would rejoice, if he at last found that the difficulty lay in the errors of his own observation, and not in the inexplicable nature of the subject. All this he would do in anxious and repeated endeavours, before he inferred that nature persevered in no law, and that that constancy, which is the foundation of all science, was perpetually broken in upon by the most capricious and unlooked-for appearances—before he would abandon himself to scepticism, and pronounce philosophy to be an impossible attainment.

5. It is our part to imitate this example. If Jesus Christ has, on the one hand, performed miracles, and sustained in the whole tenor of His history the character of a prophet, and, on the other hand, asserted to be true, what we undeniably know to be a falsehood, this is a dilemma which we are called upon to resolve by every principle, that can urge the human mind in the pursuit of liberal inquiry. It is not enough to say that the phenomena in question do not fall within the dominion of philosophy; and we therefore leave them as a fair exercise and amusement to commentators. The mathematician may say, and has said, the same thing of the moralist; yet there are moralists in the world, who will prosecute their speculations in spite of him: and, what is more, there are men who take a wider survey than either; who rise above these professional prejudices; and will allow that,



in each department of inquiry, the subjects which offer are entitled to a candid and respectful consideration. The naturalist may pronounce the same rapid judgment upon the difficulties of the theologian; yet there ever will be theologians who feel a peculiar interest in their subject; and, we trust, that there ever will be men, with a higher grasp of mind than either the mere theologian, or the mere naturalist, who are ready to acknowledge the claims of truth in every quarter—who are superior to that narrow contempt, which has made such an unhappy and malignant separation among the different orders of scientific men—who will examine the evidences of the gospel history, and, if they are found to be sufficient, will view the miracles of our Saviour with the same liberal and philosophic curiosity with which they would contemplate any grand phenomenon in the moral history of the species. If there really appear, on the face of this investigation, to be such a difficulty as the one in question, a philosopher of the order we are now describing will make many an anxious effort to extricate himself; he will not soon acquiesce in a scepticism, of which there is no other example in the wide field of human speculation; he will either make out the insufficiency of the historical evidence, or prove that the falsehood ascribed to Jesus Christ has no existence. He will try to dispose of one of the terms of the alleged contradiction, before he can prevail upon himself to admit both, and deliver his mind to a state of uncertainty, most painful to those who respect truth in all her departments.

6. We offer the above observations, not so much for the purpose of doing away the difficulty which we conscientiously believe to have no existence, as for the purpose of exposing the rapid, careless, and unphilosophical procedure of some enemies to the Christian argument. They, in the first instance, take up the rapid assumption, that Jesus Christ has, either through Himself, or His immediate disciples, made an assertion as to the antiquity of the globe, which, upon the faith of their geological speculations, they know to be a falsehood. After having fastened this stain upon the subject of the testimony, they, by one summary act of the understanding, lay aside all the external evidence for the miracles and general character of our Saviour. They will not wait to be told that this evidence is a distinct subject of examination; and that, if actually attended to, it will be found much stronger than the evidence of any other fact or history which has come down to us in the written memorials of past ages. If



this evidence is to be rejected, it must be rejected on its own proper grounds ; but if all positive testimony, and all sound reasoning upon human affairs, go to establish it, then the existence of such proof is a phenomenon which remains to be accounted for, and must ever stand in the way of positive infidelity. Until we dispose of it, we can carry our opposition to the claims of our religion, no farther than to the length of an ambiguous and mid-way scepticism. By adopting a decisive infidelity, we reject a testimony, which, of all others, has come down to us in the most perfect and unsuspecting form. We lock up a source of evidence, which is often repaired to in other questions of science and history. We cut off the authority of principles, which, if once exploded, will not terminate in the solitary mischief of darkening and destroying our theology, but will shed a baleful uncertainty over many of the most interesting speculations on which the human mind can expatiate.

7. Even admitting, then, this single objection in the subject of our Saviour's testimony, the whole length to which we can legitimately carry the objection, is scepticism, or that dilemma of the mind into which it is thrown by two contradictory appearances. This is the unavoidable result of admitting both terms in the alleged contradiction. Upon the strength of all the reasoning which has hitherto occupied us, we challenge the infidel to dispose of the one term, which lies in the strength of the historical evidence. But in different ways we may dispose of the other, which lies in the alleged falsehood of our Saviour's testimony. We may deny the truth of the geological speculation ; nor is it necessary to be an accomplished geologist, that we may be warranted to deny it. We appeal to the speculations of the geologists themselves. They neutralize one another, and leave us in possession of free ground for the informations of the Old Testament. Our imaginations have been much regaled by the brilliancy of their speculations ; but they are so opposite to each other, that we now cease to be impressed by their evidence. But there are other ways of disposing of the supposed falsehood of our Saviour's testimony. Does He really assert what has been called the Mosaical antiquity of the world ? It is true that He gives His distinct testimony to the Divine legation of Moses ; but does Moses ever say, that when God created the heavens and the earth, He did more at the time alluded to than transform them out of previously existing materials ? Or does he ever say, that there was not an interval of many ages betwixt

the first act of creation, described in the first verse of the book of Genesis, and said to have been performed at the *beginning*; and those more detailed operations, the account of which commences at the second verse, and which are described to us as having been performed in so many days? Or, finally, does he ever make us to understand, that the genealogies of man went any farther than to fix the antiquity of the species, and, of consequence, that they left the antiquity of the globe a free subject for the speculations of philosophers?—We do not pledge ourselves for the truth of one or all of these suppositions. Nor is it necessary that we should. It is enough that any of them is infinitely more rational than the rejection of Christianity in the face of its historical evidence. This historical evidence remains in all the obstinacy of experimental and well-attested facts; and as there are so many ways of expunging the other term in the alleged contradiction, we appeal to every enlightened reader, if it is at all candid or philosophical to suffer it to stand.\*

8. Respecting the infidelity which has been raised on this particular ground, it may well be remarked, that the danger which a country runs from an incursion of its enemies is not always in proportion to the number of the invaders. There is another element, besides the mere number of them, which must enter into the calculation; and that is, the unity of their movements. If it be found that the operations of the different armies counteract and neutralize one another; or that when one of the commanders resolves upon a particular method of attack, another of them not only withdraws his concurrence, but puts forth his strength to resist it—then the country may remain untouched and unhurt amid all this parade of hostility; and, in addition to the consciousness of her own strength, she derives a fresh security from the mutual jealousies of those who are opposed to her.

9. The strength of the Christian argument has never been brought fairly into contest with the speculations of geology. These speculations are almost entirely constructed upon presently existing appearances; for they are but very slightly modified by the very slender materials which have come down to us in the records of past times. Let us suppose that a very ancient record of geological facts were discovered, with the most conclusive marks of authenticity upon it, and that it gave the lie to the most popular and accepted theory of the present day. The circumstance of that theory being the most probable

\* On this subject see further, in Book II. chap. ii. of our Natural Theology.



of all these which had been started upon the facts within our reach, would not be suffered for a moment to exclude the new information which had broken in upon us. It were a sad transgression upon the inductive philosophy to refuse this information with not another reason to set it aside, than that it is inconsistent with our theory. The information must be received, if it have enough of its own appropriate evidence to make it credible—even the evidence of history. A man of true philosophical habits would be thankful for it, and if a theory must be got up, he would accommodate it to the wider field of induction which lay before him.

10. Now, it is not necessary that the author of the record in question be a naturalist by profession. Julius Cæsar may have chosen to give us the height of the cliffs at Dover, and have gratified our present geologists by giving them to understand that the actual degradation of these precipices is as rapid or as slow as they have conceived it; or he may have puzzled them with a piece of information totally unlooked-for upon this subject, and sent them a-seeking after consistency to their speculations about the alteration of level in the sea, or the inequalities of that expansive and elevating power which they fancy to be at work under the surface of the globe.

11. Moses is not a naturalist by profession; but, in the course of his narrative, he brings forward facts which may confirm or may falsify the speculations of naturalists. Strange mixture of credulity and scepticism! that the slender plausibilities of theory should have such influence upon the one, while the competency of Moses as an historian, should make no impression upon the other. If these two principles existed in different minds, it would fail to astonish us. But that there should be room in the same mind for so much facility of conviction on the one hand, and such an obstinate resistance to evidence on the other, is just one of those perversities of infidelity, which serve both to illustrate the history and to lay open the principle of its melancholy delusions.

12. Nor is it necessary to assert in positive terms the competency of Moses as an historian. It is enough to bring it forward as a point which must be disposed of, before geologists can have free room to expatiate upon that field of inquiry on which they have ventured themselves. If, by the labour of a sound and patient criticism, they can succeed in deposing the Jewish legislator from a place among the accredited historians of other



days, every lover of truth will thank them for the new light they have thrown on this very interesting question. But till this be accomplished, the testimony of Moses remains a drawback to all their theories ; and it is just as unphilosophical to withhold their attention from his narrative, as it would be for theorists in chemistry to refuse a hearing to him who offers to arrest the progress of their speculations by the narrative of his actual experiments.

13. The credibility of Moses as an historian is the right weapon for defending the integrity of our faith against the inroads of geological speculation. The tone of truth, and the consistency which pervade his narrative ; the solemn reverence for the God of truth which animates the whole of it ; its uncontrolled credit with the Jewish people in spite of all its severities against them ; the likely origin which it assigns to institutions kept up by the nation to the latest period of their history, and which no artifice could have introduced at an age subsequent to that of the historian himself ; the united testimony of Jews and Christians, that best guarantee for the integrity of the copies since the days of our Saviour ; and, above all, the express testimony of our Saviour himself, bringing the whole authority of His religion, with the full weight of its wonderful and unexampled evidences to the support of the Mosaic narrative—these are the mighty bulwarks which stand in secure defiance against the visions of geology, and out of which we may cast a fearless eye over the mustering hostility of its aerial and ever-shifting speculations.

14. But we must not forget that the geologists are nearly unanimous on one point—the far superior antiquity of this globe to the commonly received date of it, as taken from the writings of Moses. What shall we make of this ? We may feel a security as to those points in which they differ, and, confronting them with one another, may remain safe and untouched between them. But when they agree, this security fails. There is scarcely any neutralization of authority among them as to the age of the world ; and Cuvier, with his catastrophes and his epochs, leaves the popular opinion nearly as far behind him, as they who trace our present continent upwards through an indefinite series of ancestors, and assign many millions of years to the existence of each generation. In a chapter of our Natural Theology to which we have already referred, we have conceded this antiquity of the globe, and explained the grounds on which we hold it to be reconcilable with the literalities of the book of Genesis.

15.—II. The second objection, or class of objections, to Christianity which we think the Historical Evidence fully able to overbear, is grounded on the conceived incongruities between the theology of the Bible and the theology of nature. Now whatever light the theology of nature may cast, and we think it casts a great deal, on the perfections of the Divine character, and more especially His moral perfections—we hold it to be altogether incompetent for judging on the procedure of the Divine administration. We may estimate aright the *principles* of His government, without being able to judge of its *policy*; or of the particular measures by which these principles are carried out into their best possible manifestation and effect. Our conscience may tell us of the one, and fully warrant us in saying—"Just and true art thou, O God!" But the vastness and variety of His superintendence, whether as respects the eternity of its duration or the immensity of its sphere, may utterly disqualify us from pronouncing on the other. So that when a professed revelation announces certain counsels or certain forthgoings of the Divinity, we are altogether unable, on any cognizance that we may take of their character or tendency, to say, that "Just and true are all these ways."\* It is true they might be commended to our acceptance on the strength of those credentials by which the revelation is accompanied. But they do not on that account commend themselves—nor are we entitled, on any perception by us of their intrinsic character, to found either an evidence for the pretensions of that system which makes them known to us, or an objection against it. The truth is, that most precarious internal evidence has been grounded on the presumption that we know a great deal more and can judge a great deal better of the unsearchable God, and of His unsearchable processes than is at all consistent with the mediocrity of our powers; and on the other hand, in the very same presumption, have the enemies of the faith advanced objections, in every way as incompetent and irrelevant as is the evidence adduced by its defenders. There is much both of hostile and friendly argument, and more especially when the combatants adventure themselves on the subject-matter of revelation, that ought to be cancelled, whether

\* "Just and true are thy ways," Rev. xv. 3. This might well be said by those to whom the day of the revelation of hidden things has come, and to whom the mystery of God is finished—or who have witnessed its fulfilment. Previous to that great and final manifestation, it is our part to wait in humble expectancy, and to acquiesce in the mysteriousness of many things which at present we do not comprehend.



on the Christian or infidel side of the deistical controversy. It would relieve the whole question of a most unnecessary incumbrance.

16. We have experience of man, but we have no experience of God. We can reason upon the procedure of man in given circumstances, because this is an accessible subject, and comes under the cognizance of observation; but we cannot reason on the procedure of the Almighty in given circumstances. This is an inaccessible subject, and comes not within the limits of direct and personal observation. The one, like the scale and compass, and measurements of Sir Isaac Newton, will lead us on safe and firm footing to the true economy of the heavens; the other, like the ether and whirlpools, and unfounded imaginations of Des Cartes, will not only lead us to misconceive that economy, but to maintain a stubborn opposition to the only competent evidence that can be offered upon the subject.

17. We feel, that in thus disclaiming support from much of what is commonly understood by the external evidence, we do not follow the general example of those who have written on the deistical controversy. Take up Leland's performance, and it will be found that one-half of his discussion is expended upon the reasonableness of the doctrines, and in asserting the validity of the argument which is founded upon that reasonableness. It would save a vast deal of controversy, if it could be proved that much of this is superfluous and uncalled for; that, upon the authority of the proofs already insisted on, the New Testament must be received as a revelation from heaven; and that, instead of sitting in judgment over it, nothing remains on our part but an act of unreserved submission to all the doctrine and information which it offers to us. It is conceived that in this way the general argument might be made to assume a more powerful and impressive aspect; and the defence of Christianity be more accommodated to the spirit and philosophy of the times.

18. Since the spirit of Lord Bacon's philosophy began to be rightly understood, the science of external nature has advanced with a rapidity unexampled in the history of all former ages. The great axiom of his philosophy is so simple in its nature, and so undeniable in its evidence, that it is astonishing how philosophers were so late in acknowledging it, or in being directed by its authority. It is more than two thousand years since the phenomena of external nature were objects of liberal curiosity to speculative and intelligent men. Yet two centuries



have scarcely elapsed since the true path of investigation has been rightly pursued, and steadily persevered in ; since the evidence of experience has been received as paramount to every other evidence, or in other words, since philosophers have agreed, that the only way to learn the magnitude of an object, is to measure it ; the only way to learn its tangible properties, is to touch it ; and the only way to learn its visible properties, is to look at it.

19. Nothing can be more safe or more infallible than the procedure of the inductive philosophy as applied to the phenomena of external nature. It is the eye or the ear witness of everything which it records. It is at liberty to classify appearances ; but then, in the work of classifying, it must be directed only by observation. It may group phenomena according to their resemblances. It may express these resemblances in words, and announce them to the world in the form of general laws. Yet such is the hardihood of the inductive philosophy, that though a single well-attested fact should overturn a whole system, that fact must be admitted. A single experiment is often made to cut short the finest process of generalization, however painful and humiliating the sacrifice ; and though a theory, the most simple and magnificent that ever charmed the eye of an enthusiast, was on the eve of emerging from it.

20. In submitting, then, to the rules of the inductive philosophy, we do not deny that certain sacrifices must be made, and some of the most urgent propensities of the mind put under severe restraint and regulation. The human mind feels restless and dissatisfied under the anxieties of ignorance. It longs for the repose of conviction ; and, to gain this repose, it will often rather precipitate its conclusions, than wait for the tardy lights of observation and experiment. There is such a thing, too, as the love of simplicity and system—a prejudice of the understanding, which disposes it to include all the phenomena of nature under a few sweeping generalities—an indolence which loves to repose on the beauties of a theory, rather than encounter the fatiguing detail of its evidences—a painful reluctance to the admission of facts, which, however true, break in upon the majestic simplicity that we would fain ascribe to the laws and operations of the universe.

21. Now, it is the glory of Lord Bacon's philosophy, to have achieved a victory over all these delusions ; to have disciplined the minds of its votaries into an entire submission to evidence ; to have trained them up in a kind of steady coldness to all the

splendour and magnificence of theory ; and taught them to follow, with an unfaltering step, wherever the sure, though humbler path of experiment may lead them.

22. To justify the cautious procedure of the inductive philosophy, nothing more is necessary than to take a view of the actual powers and circumstances of humanity ; of the entire ignorance of man when he comes into the world, and of the steps by which that ignorance is enlightened ; of the numerous errors into which he is misled, the moment he ceases to observe, and begins to presume or to excogitate ; of the actual history of science ; its miserable progress, so long as categories and principles retained their ascendancy in the schools ; and the splendour and rapidity of its triumphs, so soon as man understood that he was nothing more than the disciple of nature, and must take his lesson as nature offers it to him.

23. What is true of the science of external nature, holds equally true of the science and phenomena of mind. On this subject, too, the presumptuous ambition of man carried him far from the sober path of experimental inquiry. He conceived that his business was not to observe, but to speculate ; to construct systems rather than consult his own experience and the experience of others ; to collect the materials of his theory, not from the history of observed facts, but from a set of assumed and excogitated principles. Now the same observations apply to this department of inquiry. We must admit to be true, not what we presume, but what we find to be so. We must restrain the enterprises of fancy. A law of the human mind must be only a series of well-authenticated facts, reduced to one general description, or grouped together under some general points of resemblance. The business of the moral as well as of the natural philosopher is not to assert what he excogitates, but to record what he observes ; not to amuse himself with the speculations of fancy, but to describe phenomena as he sees, or as he feels them. This is the business of the moral as well as of the natural inquirer. We must extend the application of Lord Bacon's principles to moral and metaphysical subjects. It was long before this application was recognised, or acted upon by philosophers. Many of the continental speculations are still infected with the presumptuous *a priori* spirit of the old schools ; though the writings of Reid and Stewart have contributed much to chase away this spirit from the metaphysics of our own country, and to bring the science of mind, as well as matter, under the entire dominion of the inductive philosophy.



24. These general observations we conceive to be a most direct and applicable introduction to that part of the subject which is before us. In discussing the evidence of Christianity, all that we ask of our reader is to bring along with him the same sober and inductive spirit that is now deemed so necessary in the prosecution of the other sciences ; to abandon every system of theology that is not supported by evidence, however much it may gratify his taste or regale his imagination ; and to admit any system of theology that is supported by evidence, however repugnant to his feelings or his prejudices ; to make conviction, in fact, paramount to inclination or to fancy ; and to maintain, through the whole process of the investigation, that strength and intrepidity of character, which will follow wherever the light of argument may conduct him, though it should land him in conclusions the most nauseous and unpalatable.

25. We have no time to enter into causes ; but the fact is undeniable. Many philosophers of the present day are disposed to nauseate everything connected with theology. They associate something low and ignoble with the prosecution of it. They regard it as not a fit subject for liberal inquiry. They turn away from it with disgust as one of the humblest departments of literary exertion. We do not say that they reject its evidences, but they evade the investigation of them. They feel no conviction ; not because they have established the fallacy of a single argument, but because they entertain a general dislike to the subject, and will not attend to it. They love to expatiate in the more kindred fields of science or elegant literature ; and while the most respectful caution and humility and steadiness are seen to preside over every department of moral and physical investigation, theology is the only subject that is suffered to remain the victim of prejudice, and of a contempt the most unjust and the most unphilosophical.

26. We do not speak of this feeling as an impiety ; we speak of it as an offence against the principles of just speculation. We do not speak of it as it allures the heart from the influence of religion ; we speak of it as it allures the understanding from the influence of evidence and truth. In a word, we are not preaching against it ; we reason against it. We contend, that it is a transgression against the rules of the inductive philosophy. All that we want is, the application of Lord Bacon's principles to the investigation before us ; and as the influence of prejudice and disgust is banished from every other department of inquiry,



we conceive it fair that it should be banished from theology also, and that our subject should have the common advantage of a hearing—where no partiality of the heart or fancy is admitted, and no other influence acknowledged than the influence of evidence over the conviction of the understanding.

27. Let us, therefore, endeavour to evince the success and felicity with which Lord Bacon's principles may be applied to the investigation before us.

28. According to Bacon, man is ignorant of everything antecedent to observation; and there is not a single department of inquiry in which he does not err the moment that he abandons it. It is true, that the greater part of every individual's knowledge is derived immediately from testimony; but still it is from testimony that brings home to his conviction the observation of others. Still it is observation which lies at the bottom of his knowledge. Still it is man taking his lesson from the actual condition of the thing which he contemplates—a condition that is altogether independent of his will, and which no speculation of his can modify or destroy. There is an obstinacy in the processes of nature which he cannot control. He must follow it. The construction of a system should not be a creative but an imitative process, which admits nothing but what evidence assures us to be true, and is founded only on the lessons of experience. It is not by the exercise of a sublime and speculative ingenuity that man arrives at truth. It is by letting himself down to the drudgery of observation. It is by descending to the sober work of seeing and feeling and experimenting. Wherever, in short, he has not had the benefit of his own observation, or the observation of others brought home to his conviction by credible testimony, there he is ignorant.

29. This is found to hold true, even in those sciences where the objects of inquiry are the most familiar and the most accessible. Before the right method of philosophizing was acted upon, how grossly did philosophers misinterpret the phenomena of external nature, when a steady perseverance in the path of observation could have led them to infallible certainty! How misled in their conception of everything around them; when, instead of making use of their senses, they delivered themselves up to the exercises of a solitary abstraction, and thought to explain everything by the fantastic play of unmeaning terms and imaginary principles! And when at last set on the right path of discovery, how totally different were the results of actual

observation, from those systems which antiquity had rendered venerable, and the authority of great names had recommended to the acquiescence of many centuries! This proves that, even in the most familiar subjects, man knows everything by observation, and is ignorant of everything without it; and that he cannot advance a single footstep in the acquirement of truth, till he bid adieu to the delusions of theory, and sternly refuse indulgence to its fondest anticipations.

30. Thus, there is both a humility and a hardihood in the philosophical temper. They are the same in principle though different in display. The first is founded on a sense of ignorance, and disposes the mind of the philosopher to pay the most respectful attention to everything that is offered in the shape of evidence. The second consists in a determined purpose to reject and to sacrifice everything that offers to oppose the influence of evidence, or to set itself up against its legitimate and well-established conclusions. In the ethereal whirlpools of Des Cartes, we see a transgression against the humility of the philosophical character. It is the presumption of knowledge on a subject where the total want of observation should have confined him to the modesty of ignorance. In the Newtonian system of the world we see both humility and hardihood. Sir Isaac commences his investigation with all the modesty of a respectful inquirer. His is the docility of a scholar who is sensible that he has all to learn. He takes his lesson as experience offers it to him, and yields a passive obedience to the authority of this great school-master. It is in his obstinate adherence to the truth which his master has given him, that the hardihood of the philosophical character begins to appear. We see him announce with entire confidence both the fact and its legitimate consequences. We see him not deterred by the singularity of his conclusions, and quite unmindful of that host of antipathies which the reigning taste and philosophy of the times mustered up to oppose him. We see him resisting the influence of every authority, but the authority of experience. We see that the beauty of the old system had no power to charm him from that process of investigation by which he destroyed it. We see him sitting upon its merits with the severity of a judge, unmoved by all those graces of simplicity and magnificence which the sublime genius of its inventor had thrown around it.

31. We look upon these two constituents of the philosophical temper, as forming the best preparation for finally terminating in



the decided Christian. In appreciating the pretensions of Christianity, there is a call both upon the humility and the hardihood of every inquirer; the humility, which feels its own ignorance, and submits without reserve to whatever comes before it in the shape of authentic and well-established evidence; and the hardihood, which sacrifices every taste and every prejudice at the shrine of conviction, which defies the scorn of a pretended philosophy, which is not ashamed of a profession that some conceive to be degraded by the homage of the superstitious vulgar, which can bring down its mind to the homeliness of the gospel, and renounce, without a sigh, all that is elegant, and splendid, and fascinating, in the speculations of moralists. In attending to the complexion of the Christian argument, we are widely mistaken if it is not precisely that kind of argument which will be most readily admitted by those whose minds have been trained to the soundest habits of philosophical investigation; and if that spirit of cautious and sober-minded inquiry, to which modern science stands indebted for all her triumphs, is not the very identical spirit which leads us to "cast down all our lofty imaginations, and to bring every thought into the captivity of the obedience of Christ."

32. On entering into any department of inquiry, the best preparation is that docility of mind which is founded on a sense of our total ignorance of the subject; and nothing is looked upon as more unphilosophical than the temerity of that *a priori* spirit, which disposes many to presume before they investigate. But if we admit the total ignorance of man antecedent to observation, even in those sciences where the objects of inquiry are the nearest and the most familiar, we will be more ready to admit his total ignorance of those subjects which are more remote and more inaccessible. If caution and modesty be esteemed so philosophical, even when employed in that little field of investigation which comes within the range of our senses; why should they not be esteemed philosophical when employed on a subject so vast, so awful, so remote from direct and personal observation, as the government of God? There can be nothing so completely above us and beyond us, as the plans of the Infinite Mind, which extend to all time and embrace all worlds. There is no subject to which the cautious and humble spirit of Lord Bacon's philosophy is more applicable; nor can we conceive a more glaring rebellion against the authority of his maxims, than for the beings of a day to sit in judgment upon the Eternal, and apply their



paltry experience to the counsels of His high and unfathomable wisdom. We do not speak of it as impious; we speak of it as unphilosophical. We are not bringing the decrees of the orthodox to bear against it; we are bringing the principles of our modern and enlightened schools. We are applying the very same principles to a system of theism, that we would do to a system of geology. Both may regale the fancy with the grandeur of their contemplations; both may receive embellishment from the genius and imagination of their inventors; both may carry us along with the powers of a captivating eloquence: but all this is not enough to satisfy the severe and scrupulous spirit of the modern philosophy. Give us facts. Give us appearances. Show us how, from the experience of a life or a century, you can draw a legitimate conclusion so boundless in its extent, and by which you propose to fix down, both the processes of a remote antiquity, and the endless progression either of nature or of Providence in future ages? Are there any historical documents? Any memorials of the experience of past times? On a question of such magnitude, we would esteem the recorded observations of some remote age to be peculiarly valuable, and worth all the ingenuity and eloquence which a philosopher could bestow on the limited experience of one or two generations. A process of geology may take millions of years before it reaches its accomplishment. It is impossible that we can collect the law or the character of this process from the experience of a single century, which does not furnish us one single step in this vast and immeasurable progression. We look as far as we can into a distant antiquity, and take hold with avidity of any authentic document, by which we can ascertain a single fact to guide and to enlighten us in this interesting speculation. The same caution is necessary in the subject before us. The administration of the Supreme Being is coeval with the first purposes of His uncreated mind, and it points to eternity. The life of man is but a point in that progress, to which we see no end, and can assign no beginning. We are not able to collect the law or the character of this administration from an experience so momentary. We therefore cast an eye on the history of past times. We examine every document which comes before us. We compare all the moral phenomena which can be collected from the narratives of antiquity. We seize with avidity every record of the manifestations of Providence; every fact which can enlighten the ways of God to man; and we would esteem it a deviation from the right spirit

and temper of philosophical investigation, were we to suffer the crude or fanciful speculations of our own limited experience to take a precedency over the authentic informations of history.

33. But this is not all. Our experience is not only limited in point of time ; it is also limited in point of extent. To assign the character of the Divine administration from the little that offers itself to the notice of our own personal experience, would be far more absurd than to infer the history and character of the kingdom from the history and character of our own family. Vain is the attempt to convey in language what the most powerful imagination sinks under. How small the globe, and "all which it inherits," is in the immensity of creation ! How humble a corner in the immeasurable fields of nature and of Providence ! If the whole visible creation were to be swept away, we think of the dark and awful solitude which it would leave behind it in the unpeopled regions of space. But, to a mind that could take in the whole, and throw a wide survey over the innumerable worlds which roll beyond the ken of the human eye, there would be no blank ; and the universe of God would appear a scene as goodly and majestic as ever. Now it is the administration of this God that we sit in judgment upon ; the counsels of Him whose wisdom and energy are of a kind so inexplicable ; whom no magnitude can overpower, whom no littleness can escape, whom no variety can bewilder ; who gives vegetation to every blade of grass, and moves every particle of blood which circulates through the veins of the minutest animal ; and all this by the same omnipotent arm that is abroad upon the universe, and presides in high authority over the destiny of all worlds.

34. It is impossible not to mingle the moral impressions of piety with such a contemplation. But suppose these impressions to be excluded, that the whole may be reduced to a matter of abstract and unfeeling intelligence. The question under consideration is, How far the experience of man can lead him to any certain conclusions as to the processes of the Divine administration ? If it does lead him to some certain conclusions, then, in the spirit of the Baconian philosophy, he will apply these conclusions to the information derived from other sources ; and they will of course affect, or destroy, or confirm the credibility of that information. If, on the other hand, it appears that experience gives no light, no direction on the subject ; then, in the very same spirit, he will submit his mind as a blank surface to all the positive information which comes to it from any other quarter.



We take our lesson as it comes to us, provided we are satisfied beforehand that it comes from a source which is authentic. We set up no presumptions of our own against the authority of the unquestionable evidence that we have met with, and reject all the suggestions which our defective experience can furnish, as the follies of a rash and fanciful speculation.

35. Now, let it be observed, that the great strength of the Christian argument, as far as we have yet expounded it, lies in the historical evidence for the truth of the gospel narrative. In discussing the light of this evidence, we walk by the light of experience. We assign the degree of weight that is due to the testimony of the first Christians upon the observed principles of human nature. We do not step beyond the cautious procedure of Lord Bacon's philosophy. We keep within the safe and certain limits of experimental truth. We believe the testimony of the apostles; because, from what we know of the human character, it is impossible that men in their circumstances could have persevered as they did in the assertion of a falsehood; it is impossible that they could have imposed this falsehood upon such a multitude of followers; it is impossible that they could have escaped detection, surrounded as they were by a host of enemies so eager and so determined in their resentments. On this kind of argument we are quite at home. There is no theory, no assumption. We feel every inch of the ground we are treading upon. The degree of credit that should be annexed to the testimony of the apostles is altogether a question of experience. Every principle which we apply towards the decision of this question, is founded upon materials which lie before us, and are every day within the reach of observation. Our belief in the testimony of the apostles is founded upon our experience of human nature and human affairs. In the whole process of the inquiry, we never wander from that sure though humble path which has been pointed out to us by the great master of philosophizing. We never cast off the authority of those maxims, which have been found in every other department of knowledge to be sound and infallible. We never suffer assumption to take the precedence of observation, or abandon that safe and certain mode of investigation, which is the only one suited to the real mediocrity of our powers.

36. It appears to us that the disciples of the infidel philosophy have reversed this process. They take a loftier flight. We seldom find them upon the ground of the historical evidence.



It is not, in general, upon the weight, or the nature of human testimony, that they venture to pronounce on the crebibility of the Christian revelation. It is on the subject-matter of that revelation itself. It is on what they conceive to be the absurdity of its doctrines. It is because they see something in the nature or dispensation of Christianity, which they think not agreeable to that line of proceeding which the Almighty should observe in the government of His creatures. Rousseau expresses his astonishment at the strength of the historical testimony; so strong, that the inventor of the narrative appeared to him to be more miraculous than the hero. But the absurdities of this said revelation are sufficient, in his mind, to bear down the whole weight of its direct and external evidences. There was something in the doctrines of the New Testament repulsive to the taste, and the imagination, and perhaps even to the convictions, of this interesting enthusiast. He could not reconcile them with his pre-established conceptions of the Divine character and mode of operation. To submit to these doctrines, he behoved to surrender that theism, which the powers of his ardent mind had wrought up into a most beautiful and delicious speculation. Such a sacrifice was not to be made. It was too painful. It would have taken away from him what every mind of genius and sensibility esteems to be the highest of all luxuries. It would destroy a system, which had all that is fair and magnificent to recommend it, and mar the gracefulness of that fine intellectual picture on which this wonderful man had bestowed all the embellishments of feeling, and fancy, and eloquence.

37. In as far, then, as we can judge of the conduct of man in given circumstances, we would pass a favourable sentence upon the testimony of the apostles. "But," says the deist, "I judge of the conduct of God; and what the apostles tell me of him is so opposite to that judgment, that I discredit their testimony." The question at issue between us is, Shall we admit the testimony of the apostles, upon the application of principles founded on observation, and as certain as is our experience of human affairs? Or, shall we reject that testimony upon the application of principles that are altogether beyond the range of observation, and as doubtful and imperfect in their nature, as is our experience of the counsels of Heaven? In the first argument there is no assumption. We are competent to judge of the behaviour of man in given circumstances. This is a subject completely accessible to observation. The second argument is founded

upon assumption entirely. We are not competent to judge of the conduct of the Almighty in given circumstances. Here we are precluded, by the nature of the subject, from the benefit of observation. There is no antecedent experience to guide or to enlighten us. It is not for man to assume what is right, or proper, or natural for the Almighty to do. It is not in the mere spirit of piety that we say so; it is in the spirit of the soundest experimental philosophy. The argument of the Christian is precisely what the maxims of Lord Bacon would dispose us to acquiesce in. The argument of the infidel is precisely that argument which the same maxims would dispose us to reject; and when put by the side of the Christian argument, it appears as crude and as unphilosophical as do the ingenious speculations of the schoolmen, when set in opposition to the rigour, and evidence, and precision, which reign in every department of modern science.

38. The application of Lord Bacon's philosophy to the study of external nature was a happy epoch in the history of physical science. It is not long since this application has been extended to the study of moral and intellectual phenomena. All that we contend for is, that our subject should have the benefit of the same application; and we count it hard, while in every other department of inquiry a respect for truth is found sufficient to repress the appetite for system-building, that theology, the loftiest and most inaccessible of all the sciences, should still remain infected with a spirit so exploded and so unphilosophical; and that the fancy and theory and unsupported speculation so current among the deists and demi-infidels of the day, should be held paramount to the authority of facts which have come down to us with a weight of evidence and testimony that is quite unexampled in the history of ancient times.

39. What is science but a record of observed phenomena, grouped together according to certain points of resemblance, which have been suggested by an actual attention to the phenomena themselves? We never think of questioning the existence of the phenomena, after we have demonstrated the genuineness and authenticity of the record. After this is demonstrated, the singular or unexpected nature of the phenomena is not suffered to weaken their credibility—a credibility which can only be destroyed by the authority of our own personal observation or some other record possessed of equal or superior pretensions. But in none of the inductive sciences is it in the power of a student to verify every-



thing by his own personal observation. He must put up with the observations of others, brought home to the convictions of his own mind by creditable testimony. In the science of geology this is eminently the case. In a science of such extent our principles must be in part founded upon the observations of others, transmitted to us from a distant country. And in a science, the processes of which are so lengthened in point of time, our principles should also in part be founded on the observations of others, transmitted to us from a remote antiquity. Any observations of our own are so limited, both in point of space and of time, that we never think of opposing their authority to the evidence which is laid before us. Our whole attention is directed to the validity of the record; and the moment that this validity is established, we hold it incumbent upon us to submit our minds to the entire and unmodified impression of the testimony contained in it. Now, all that we ask is, that the same process of investigation be observed in theology, which is held to be so sound and so legitimate in other sciences. In a science of such extent, as to embrace the wide domain of moral and intelligent nature, we feel the littleness of that range to which our own personal observations are confined. We should be glad, not merely of the information transmitted to us from a distant country, but of the authentic information transmitted to us by any other order of beings, in some distant and unknown part of the creation. In a science, too, which has for its object the lengthened processes of the Divine administration, we should like if any record of past times could enable us to extend our observations beyond the limits of our own ephemeral experience; and if there are any events of a former age possessed of such a peculiar and decisive character as would help us to some satisfactory conclusion in this greatest and most interesting of the sciences.

40. On a subject so much above us and beyond us we should never think of opposing any preconceptions to the evidence of history. We should maintain the humility of the inductive spirit. We should cast about for facts and events and appearances. We should offer our minds as a blank surface to everything that came to them, supported by unexceptionable evidence. It is not upon the nature of the facts themselves, that we should pronounce upon their credibility, but upon the nature of that testimony by which they were supported. Our whole attention should be directed to the authority of the record. After this



was established, we should surrender our whole understanding to its contents. We should school down every antipathy within us, and disown it as a childish affection, unworthy of a philosopher who professes to follow truth through all the disgusts and discouragements which surround it. There are men of splendid reputation in our enlightened circles who never attended to this speculation, and who annex to the gospel of Christ nothing else than ideas of superstition and vulgarity. In braving their contempt, we should feel ourselves in the best element for the display and exercise of the philosophical temper. We should rejoice in the omnipotence of truth; and anticipate in triumph the victory which it must accomplish over the pride of science, and the fastidiousness of literature. It should not be the enthusiasm of a visionary which would support us, but the inward working of the very same principle which sustained Galileo, when he adhered to the result of his experiments, and Newton, when he opposed his measurements and observations to the tide of prejudice he had to encounter from the prevailing taste and philosophy of the times.

41. We conceive that inattention to the above principles has led many of the most popular and respected writers in the deistical controversy, to introduce a great deal of discussion that is foreign to the merits of the question altogether; and in this way, the attention is often turned away from the point in which the main strength of the argument lies. An infidel, for example, objects against some process or other in the economy of the gospel. To repel the objection, the Christian conceives it necessary to vindicate the process, and to show how consistent it is with all our antecedent conceptions of God and of His ways. All this we count superfluous. It is imposing an unnecessary task upon ourselves. Enough for us to have established the authority of the Christian revelation upon the ground of its historical evidence. All that remains is to submit our minds to the fair interpretation of Scripture. Yes; but how do you dispose of the objection drawn from the independent and *a priori* imagination of our adversary? In precisely the same way that we would dispose of an objection drawn from some speculative system, against the truth of any physical fact that has been well established by observation or testimony. We would disown the system, and oppose the obstinacy of the fact to all the elegance and ingenuity of the speculation.

42. We are sensible that this is not enough to satisfy a

numerous class of very sincere and well-disposed Christians. There are many of this description who, antecedent to the study of the Christian revelation altogether, repose a very strong confidence in the light of nature, and think that, upon the mere strength of it, they can often pronounce with a considerable degree of assurance on the plans of the Divine administration. To such as these, something more is necessary than the external evidences on which Christianity rests. You must reconcile the doctrines of Christianity with those previous conceptions which the light of nature has given them; and a great deal of elaborate argument is often expended in bringing about this accommodation. It is, of course, a work of greater difficulty to convince this description of people, though, in point of fact, this difficulty has been overcome in a way the most masterly and decisive, by one of the soundest and most philosophical of our theologians.

43. To another description of Christians, this attempt to reconcile the doctrines of Christianity with the light of nature is superfluous. Give them evidence for Christianity, and unless its doctrines stand clearly opposed to moral, or logical, or mathematical, or historical truth, all preconceptions of their own will fly like so many visionary phantoms before the light of its overbearing authority. With them the argument is reduced to a narrower compass. Is the testimony of the apostles and first Christians sufficient to establish the credibility of the facts which are recorded in the New Testament? The question is made to rest exclusively on the character of this testimony, and the circumstances attending it; and no antecedent theory of their own is suffered to mingle with the investigation. If the historical evidence of Christianity is found to be conclusive, they conceive the investigation to be at an end; and that nothing remains, on their part, but an act of unconditional submission to all its doctrines.

44. Though it might be proper, in the present state of opinion, to accommodate to both these cases, yet we profess ourselves to belong to the latter description of Christians. We hold by the insufficiency of nature to pronounce upon the intrinsic merits of any revelation, and think that the authority of every revelation rests mainly upon its historical and experimental evidences, and upon such marks of honesty in the composition itself as would apply to any human performance. We rest this opinion, not upon any fanatical impression of the ignorance of man, or how sinful it is for a weak and guilty mortal to pronounce upon the



counsels of Heaven, and the laws of the Divine administration. We disown this presumption, not merely because it is sinful, but because we conceive it to be unphilosophical; and precisely analogous to that theorizing *a priori* spirit, which the wisdom of Bacon has banished from all the schools of philosophy.

45. For the satisfaction of the first class, we refer them to that argument which has been prosecuted with so much ability and success by Bishop Butler, in his *Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion*. It is not so much the object of this author to found any positive argument on the accordancy which subsists between the processes of the Divine administration in nature, and the processes ascribed to God by revelation, as to repel the argument founded upon their supposed discordancy. To one of the second class, the argument of Bishop Butler is less called for; but as to one of the first class, we can conceive nothing more calculated to quiet his difficulties. He believes a God; and he must therefore believe the character and existence of God to be reconcilable with all that he observes in the events and phenomena around him. He questions the claims of the New Testament to be a revelation from heaven; because he conceives that it ascribes a plan and an economy to the Supreme Being which are unworthy of His character. We offer no positive solution of this difficulty. We profess ourselves to be too little acquainted with the dispensations of God; and that, in this little corner of His works, we see not far enough to offer any decision on the merits of a government which embraces worlds, and reaches eternity. We think we do enough if we give a sufficiency of experimental proof for the New Testament being a true and authentic message from heaven; and that therefore nothing remains for us but to attend and to submit to it. But the argument of Bishop Butler enables us to do still more than this. It enables us to say, that the very thing objected against in Christianity exists in nature; and that therefore the same God who is the author of nature, may be the author of Christianity. We do not say that any positive evidence can be founded upon this analogy. But, in as far as it goes to repel the objection, it is triumphant. A man has no right to retain his theism if he reject Christianity upon difficulties to which natural religion is equally liable. If Christianity tell us that the guilt of a father has brought suffering and vice upon his posterity, it is what we see exemplified in a thousand instances amongst the families around us. If it tell us that the innocent



have suffered for the guilty, it is nothing more than what all history and all observation have made perfectly familiar to us. If it tell us of one portion of the human race being distinguished by the sovereign will of the Almighty, for superior knowledge, or superior privileges; it only adds one inequality more to the many inequalities which we perceive every day in the gifts of nature, of fortune, and of providence. In short, without entering into all the details of that argument, which Butler has brought forward in a way so masterly and decisive, there is not a single impeachment which can be offered against the God of Christianity, that may not, if consistently proceeded upon, be offered against the God of nature itself. If the one be unworthy of God, the other is equally so; and if, in spite of these difficulties, we still retain the conviction that there is a God of nature, it is not fair or rational to suffer them to outweigh all that positive evidence and testimony, which have been adduced for proving that the same God is the God of Christianity also.

46. If Christianity be still resisted, it appears to us that the only consistent refuge is atheism. The very same peculiarities in the dispensation of the gospel, which lead the infidel to reject it as unworthy of God, go to prove that nature is unworthy of Him; and land us in the melancholy conclusion, that whatever theory can be offered as to the mysterious origin and existence of the things which be, they are not under the dominion of a supreme and intelligent mind. Nor do we look upon atheism as an altogether hopeless species of infidelity, unless in so far as it proves a stubborn disposition of the heart to resist every religious conviction. Viewed purely as an intellectual subject, we look upon the mind of an atheist as not an entirely unfit recipient for the proofs of Christianity. It is a blank surface, on which evidence may make a fair impression, and where the finger of history may inscribe its credible and well-attested information; the mind of a presumptuous and prejudiced deist, on the other hand, is occupied with preconceptions. It will not take what history offers to it. It puts itself into the same unphilosophical posture, in which the mind of a prejudiced Cartesian opposed its theory of the heavens to the demonstration and measurements of Newton. The theory of the deist upon a subject, where truth is still more inaccessible, and speculation still more presumptuous, sets him to resist the most safe and competent evidence that can be appealed to. What was originally the evidence of observation, and is now transformed into the evidence of testimony,

comes down to us in a series of historical documents, the closest and most consistent that all antiquity can furnish. It is the unfortunate theory which forms the grand obstacle to the admission of the Christian miracles, and which leads the deist to an exhibition of himself so unphilosophical, as that of trampling on the soundest laws of evidence, by bringing an historical fact under the tribunal of a theoretical principle. The deistical speculation of Rousseau, by which he neutralized the testimony of the first Christians, is as complete a transgression against the temper and principles of true science, as a category of Aristotle when employed to overrule an experiment in chemistry. But however this be, it is evident that Rousseau would have given a readier reception to the gospel history, had his mind not been pre-occupied with the speculation; and the negative state of atheism would in him have been more favourable to the admission of those facts, which are connected with the origin and establishment of our religion in the world.

47. This suggests the way in which the evidence for Christianity might be carried home to the mind of an atheist. He sees nothing in the phenomena around him, that can warrant him to believe in the existence of a living and intelligent principle, which gave birth and movement to all things. He does not say that he would refuse credit to the existence of God upon sufficient evidence; but he says that there are not such appearances of design in nature, as to supply him with that evidence. He does not deny the existence of God to be a possible truth; but he affirms, that while there is nothing before him but the consciousness of what passes within, and the observation of what passes without, it remains an assertion destitute of proof, and can have no more effect upon his conviction than any other nonentity of the imagination. There is a mighty difference between *not proven* and *disproven*. We see nothing in the argument of the atheists which goes further, than to establish the former sentence upon the question of God's existence. It is altogether an argument *ab ignorantia*; and the same ignorance which restrains them from asserting in positive terms that God exists, equally restrains them from asserting in positive terms that God does not exist. The assertion may be offered, that, in some distant regions of the creation, there are tracts of space which, instead of being occupied like the tracts around us with suns and planetary systems, teem only with animated beings, who, without being supported like us on the firm surface of a world, have the power of



spontaneous movement in free spaces. We cannot say that the assertion is not true, but we can say that it is not proven. It carries in it no positive character either of truth or falsehood, and may therefore be admitted on appropriate and satisfying evidence. But till that evidence comes, the mind is in a state entirely neutral; and such we conceive to be the neutral state of the atheist, as to what he holds to be the unproved assertion of the existence of God.

48. To the neutral mind of the atheist, then, unfurnished as it is with any previous conception, we offer the historical evidence of Christianity. We do not ask him to presume the existence of God. We ask him to examine the miracles of the New Testament merely as recorded events, and to admit no other principle into the investigation than those which are held to be satisfying and decisive on any other subject of written testimony. The sweeping principle upon which Rousseau, filled with his own assumptions, condemned the historical evidence for the truth of the gospel narrative, can have no influence on the blank and unoccupied mind of an atheist. He has no presumptions upon the subject; for to his eye the phenomena of nature sit so loose and unconnected with that intelligent Being to whom they have been referred as their origin, that he does not feel himself entitled, from these phenomena, to ascribe any existence, any character, any attributes, or any method of administration to such a Being. He is therefore in a condition of perfect freedom for submitting his understanding to the entire impression of the historical evidence. Those difficulties which perplex the deists, who cannot recognise in the God of the New Testament the same features and the same principles in which they have invested the God of nature, are no difficulties to him. He has no God of nature to confront with that real, though invisible power, which lay at the bottom of those astonishing miracles, on which history has stamped her most authentic characters. Though the power which presided there should be an arbitrary, an unjust, or a malignant being, all this may startle a deist, but it will not prevent a consistent atheist from acquiescing in any legitimate inference to which the miracles of the gospel, viewed in the simple light of historical facts, may chance to carry him. He cannot bring his antecedent information into play upon this question. He professes to have no antecedent information on the subject; and this sense of his entire ignorance, which lies at the bottom of his atheism, would expunge from his mind all that



is theoretical, and make it the passive recipient of everything which observation offers to its notice, or which credible testimony has brought down to it of the history of past ages.

49. What then, we ask, does the atheist make of the miracles of the New Testament? If he questions their truth, he must do it upon grounds that are purely historical. He is precluded from every other ground by the very principle on which he has rested his atheism; and we, therefore, upon the strength of that testimony which has been already exhibited, press the admission of these miracles as facts. If there be nothing in the ordinary phenomena of nature, to infer a God, do these extraordinary phenomena supply him with no argument? Does a voice from heaven make no impression upon him? And we have the best evidence which history can furnish, that such a voice was uttered—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." We have the evidence of a fact, for the existence of that very Being from whom the voice proceeded; and the evidence of a thousand facts, for a power superior to nature: because, on the impulse of a volition, it counteracted her laws and processes; it allayed the wind; it gave sight to the blind; health to the diseased; and, at the utterance of a voice, it gave life to the dead. The ostensible agent in all these wonderful proceedings gave not only credentials of his power, but he gave such credentials of his honesty, as dispose our understanding to receive his explanation of them. We do not at present avail ourselves of any other principle than what an atheist will acknowledge. He understands, as well as we do, the natural signs of veracity, which lie in the tone, the manner, the countenance, the high moral expression of worth and benevolence, and, above all, in that firm and undaunted constancy, which neither contempt, nor poverty, nor death, could shift from any of its positions. All these claims upon our belief were accumulated, to an unexampled degree, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; and when we couple with them His undoubted miracles, and the manner in which His own personal appearance was followed up by a host of witnesses, who, after a catastrophe which would have proved a death-blow to any cause of imposture, offered themselves to the eye of the public, with the same powers, the same evidence, and the same testimony—it seems impossible to resist His account of the invisible principle, which gave birth and movement to the whole of this wonderful transaction. Whatever atheism we may have founded on the common phenomena around us, here is a new

phenomenon which demands our attention—the testimony of a man who, in addition to evidences of honesty, more varied and more satisfying than were ever offered by a brother of the species, had a voice from the clouds, and the power of working miracles, to vouch for Him. We do not think that the account which this man gives of Himself can be viewed either with indifference or distrust, and the account is most satisfying. “I proceeded forth and came from God.”—“He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.”—“Even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.” He had elsewhere said, that God was His Father. The existence of God is here laid before us, by an evidence altogether distinct from the natural argument of the schools; and it may therefore be admitted in spite of any felt deficiency in that argument. From the same pure and unquestionable source we gather our information of His attributes. “God is true.”—“God is a spirit.” He is omnipotent, “for with God all things are possible.” He is intelligent, “for he knoweth what things we have need of.” He sees all things, and He directs all things; “for the very hairs of our head are numbered,” and “a sparrow falleth not to the ground without his permission.”

50. The evidences of the Christian religion are suited to every species of infidelity. Even let the atheist, unfurnished with any previous conception, come as he is; and upon the strength of his own favourite principle, viewing it as a pure intellectual question, and abstracting from the more unmanageable tendencies of the heart and temper, he ought to take in Christianity, and that too in a far purer and more scriptural form, than can be expected from those whose minds are tainted and preoccupied with their former speculations.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### REMARKS ON THE ARGUMENT FROM PROPHECY.

1. PROPHECY is another species of evidence to which Christianity professes an abundant claim. The prediction of what is future may not be delivered in terms so clear and intelligible as the history of what is past; and yet, in its actual fulfilment, it may leave no doubt on the mind of the inquirer, that it was a prediction, and that the event in question was in the contempla-

tion of him who uttered it. It may be easy to dispose of one isolated prophecy, by ascribing it to accident; but when we observe a number of these prophecies, delivered in different ages, and all bearing an application to the same events, or the same individual, it is difficult to resist the impression that they were actuated by a knowledge superior to human. They form part, therefore, of the miraculous evidence for Christianity—a miracle of knowledge being an indication of the supernatural, no less decisive than a miracle of power.

2. The obscurity of the prophetical language has been often complained of; but it is not so often attended to, that if the prophecy which foretells an event were as clear as the narrative which describes it, it would in many cases annihilate the argument. Were the history of any individual foretold in terms as explicit as it is in the power of narrative to make them, it might be competent for any usurper to set himself forward, and, in as far as it depended upon his own agency, he might realize that history. He has no more to do than to take his lesson from the prophecy before him; but could it be said that fulfilment like this carried in it the evidence of anything Divine or miraculous? If the prophecy of a Prince and a Saviour, in the Old Testament, were different from what they are, and delivered in the precise and intelligible terms of an actual history, then every accomplishment which could be brought about by the agency of those who understood the prophecy, and were anxious for its verification, is lost to the argument. It would be instantly said, that the agents in the transaction took their clue from the prophecy before them. It is the way, in fact, in which infidels have attempted to evade the argument as it actually stands. In the New Testament, an event is sometimes said to happen, *that it might be fulfilled* which was spoken by some of the old prophets. If every event which enters into the gospel had been under the control of agents merely human, and friends to Christianity, then we might have had reason to pronounce the whole history to be one continued process of artful and designed accommodation to the Old Testament prophecies. But the truth is, that many of the events pointed at in the Old Testament, so far from being brought about by the agency of Christians, were brought about in opposition to their most anxious wishes. Some of them were brought about by the agency of their most decided enemies; and some of them, such as the dissolution of the Jewish state, and the dispersion of its people amongst all countries, were quite beyond the control



of the apostles and their followers, and were effected by the intervention of a neutral party, which at the time took no interest in the question, and which was a stranger to the prophecy, though the unconscious instrument of its fulfilment.

3. Lord Bolingbroke has carried the objection so far, that he asserts Jesus Christ to have brought on His own death, by a series of wilful and preconcerted measures, merely to give the disciples who came after Him the triumph of an appeal to the old prophecies. This is ridiculous enough; but it serves to show with what facility an infidel might have evaded the whole argument, had these prophecies been free of all that obscurity which is now so loudly complained of.

4. The best form for the purposes of argument, in which a prophecy can be delivered, is to be so obscure, as to leave the event, or rather its main circumstances, unintelligible before the fulfilment, and so clear as to be intelligible after it. It is easy to conceive that this may be an attainable object; and it is saying much for the argument as it stands, that the happiest illustrations of this clearness on the one hand, and this obscurity on the other, are to be gathered from the actual prophecies of the Old Testament.

5. It is not, however, by this part of the argument, that we expect to reclaim the enemy of our religion from his infidelity; not that the examination would not satisfy him, but that the examination will not be given. What a violence it would be offering to all his antipathies, were we to land him, at the outset of our discussions, among the chapters of Daniel or Isaiah! He has too inveterate a contempt for the Bible. He nauseates the whole subject too strongly to be prevailed upon to accompany us to such an exercise. On such a subject as this, there is no contact, no approximation betwixt us; and we therefore leave him with the assertion—an assertion which he has no title to pronounce upon, till after he has finished the very examination in which we are most anxious to engage him—that in the numerous prophecies of the Old Testament, there is such a multitude of allusions to the events of the New, as will give a strong impression to the mind of every inquirer, that the whole forms one magnificent series of communications betwixt the visible and the invisible world; a great plan over which the unseen God presides in wisdom, and which, beginning with the first ages of the world, is still receiving new developments from every great step in the history of the species.

6. It is impossible to give a complete exposition of this argument without an actual reference to the prophecies themselves; and this we at present abstain from. But it can be conceived, that a prophecy, when first announced, may be so obscure, as to be unintelligible in many of its circumstances; and yet may so far explain itself by its accomplishment, as to carry along with it the most decisive evidence of its being a prophecy. And the argument may be so far strengthened by the number, and distance, and independence, of the different prophecies, all bearing an application to the same individual and the same history, as to leave no doubt on the mind of the observer, that the events in question were in the actual contemplation of those who uttered the prediction. If the terms of the prophecy were not comprehended, it at least takes off the suspicion of the event being brought about by the control or agency of men who were interested in the accomplishment. If the prophecies of the Old Testament are just invested in such a degree of obscurity, as is enough to disguise many of the leading circumstances from those who lived before the fulfilment—while they derive from the event an explanation satisfying to all who live after it, then, we say, the argument for the divinity of the whole is stronger than if no such obscurity had existed. In the history of the New Testament, we see a natural and consistent account of the delusion respecting the Messiah, in which this obscurity had left the Jewish people—of the strong prejudices even of the first disciples—of the manner in which these prejudices were dissipated, only by the accomplishment—and of their final conviction in the import of these prophecies being at last so strong, that it often forms their main argument for the divinity of that new religion which they were commissioned to publish to the world. Now, assuming, what we still persist in asserting, and ask to be tried upon, that an actual comparison of the prophecies in the Old Testament with their alleged fulfilment in the New, will leave a conviction behind it, that there is a real correspondence betwixt them; we see, in the great events of the new dispensation, brought about by the blind instrumentality of prejudice and opposition, far more unambiguous characters of the finger of God, than if everything had happened with the full concurrence and anticipation of the different actors in this history.

7. There is another essential part of the argument which is much strengthened by this obscurity. It is necessary to fix the date of the prophecies, or to establish at least that the time of



their publication was antecedent to the events to which they refer. Now, had these prophecies been delivered in terms so explicit, as to force the concurrence of the whole Jewish nation, the argument for their antiquity would not have come down in a form as satisfying as that in which it is actually exhibited. The testimony of the Jews, to the date of their sacred writings, would have been refused as an interested testimony. Whereas to evade the argument as it stands, we must admit a principle, which, in no question of ordinary criticism, would be suffered for a single moment to influence our understanding. We must conceive that two parties, at the very time that they were influenced by the strongest mutual hostility, combined to support a fabrication; that they have not violated this combination; that the numerous writers on both sides of the question have not suffered the slightest hint of this mysterious compact to escape them; and that, though the Jews are galled incessantly by the triumphant tone of the Christian appeals to their own prophecies, they have never been tempted to let out a secret which would have brought the argument of the Christians into disgrace, and shown the world how falsehood and forgery mingled with their pretensions.

8. In the rivalry which, from the very commencement of our religion, has always obtained betwixt Jews and Christians; in the mutual animosities of Christian sects; in the vast multiplication of copies of the Scriptures; in the distant and independent societies which were scattered over so many countries; we see the most satisfying pledges, both for the integrity of the Sacred Writings, and for the date which all parties agree in ascribing to them. We hear of the many securities which have been provided in the various forms of registrations, and duplicates, and depositaries; but neither the wisdom nor the interest of men ever provided more effectual checks against forgery and corruption than we have in the instance before us. And the argument, in particular, for the antecedence of the prophecies to the events in the New Testament is so well established by the concurrence of the two rival parties, that we do not see how it is in the power of additional testimony to strengthen it.

9. But neither is it true, that the prophecies are delivered in terms so obscure, as to require a painful examination before we can obtain a full perception of the argument. Those prophecies which relate to the fate of particular cities, such as Nineveh, and Tyre, and Babylon; those which relate to the issue of par-



ticular wars, in which the kings of Israel and Judah were engaged ; and some of those which relate to the future history of the adjoining countries, are not so much veiled by symbolical language, as to elude the understanding even of the most negligent observers. It is true, that in these instances, both the prophecy and the fulfilment appear to us in the light of a distant antiquity. They have accomplished their end. They kept alive the faith and worship of successive generations. They multiplied the evidences of the true religion ; and account for a phenomenon in ancient history that is otherwise inexplicable—the existence and preservation of one solitary monument of pure theism in the midst of a corrupt and idolatrous world.

10. But to descend a little further. We gather, from the state of opinions at the time of our Saviour, so many testimonies to the clearness of the old prophecies. The time and the place of our Saviour's appearance in the world, and the triumphant progress, if not the nature of His kingdom, were perfectly understood by the priests and chief men of Judea. We have it from the testimony of profane authors, that there was at that time a general expectation of a prince and a prophet all over the East. The destruction of Jerusalem was another example of the fulfilment of a clear prophecy ; and this, added to other predictions uttered by our Saviour, and which received their accomplishment in the first generation of the Christian Church, would have its use in sustaining the faith of the disciples amidst the perplexities of that anxious and distressing period.

11. We can even come down to the present day, and point to the accomplishment of clear prophecies in the actual history of the world. The present state of Egypt, and the present state of the Jews, are the examples which we fix upon. The one is an actual fulfilment of a clear prophecy. The other is also an actual fulfilment, and forms in itself the likeliest preparation for another accomplishment that is yet to come. Nor do we conceive that these clear and literal fulfilments exhaust the whole of the argument from prophecy. They only form one part of the argument ; but a part so obvious and irresistible, as should invite every lover of truth to the examination of the remainder. They should secure such a degree of respect for the subject, as to engage the attention, and awaken even in the mind, of the most rapid and superficial observer, a suspicion that there may be something in it. They should soften that contempt which

repels so many from investigating the argument at all, or at all events they render that contempt inexcusable.

12. The whole history of the Jews is calculated to allure the curiosity ; and, had it not been leagued with the defence and illustration of our faith, would have drawn the attention of many a philosopher, as the most singular exhibition of human nature that ever was recorded in the annals of the world. The most satisfying cause of this phenomenon is to be looked for in the history which describes its origin and progress ; and by denying the truth of that history, we abandon the only explanation which can be given of this wonderful people. It is quite in vain to talk of the immutability of Eastern habits, as exemplified in the nations of Asia. What other people ever survived the same annihilating processes ? We do not talk of conquest, where the whole amount of the effect is in general a change of dynasty or of government ; but where the language, the habits, the denomination, and, above all, the geographical position, still remain to keep up the identity of the people. But in the history of the Jews, we see a strong indestructible principle which maintained them in a separate form of existence amid changes that no other nation ever survived. We confine ourselves to the overthrow of their nation in the first century of our epoch, and appeal to the disinterested testimonies of Tacitus and Josephus, if ever the cruelty of war devised a process of more terrible energy for the utter extirpation of a name and a remembrance from the world. They have been dispersed among all countries. They have no common tie of locality or government to keep them together. All the ordinary principles of assimilation, which make law, and religion, and manners, so much a matter of geography, are in their instance suspended. Even the smallest particles of this broken mass have resisted an affinity of almost universal operation, and remained undiluted by the strong and overwhelming admixture of foreign ingredients. And, in exception to everything which history has recorded of the revolutions of the species, we see in this wonderful race a vigorous principle of identity, which has remained in undiminished force for nearly two thousand years, and still pervades every shred and fragment of their widely-scattered population. Now, if the infidel insist upon it, we shall not rest on this as an argument. We can afford to give it up ; for in the abundance of our resources, we feel independent of it. We shall say that it is enough, if it can reclaim him from his levity, and compel his attention to the other

evidences which we have to offer him. All we ask of him is to allow that the undeniable singularity which is before his eyes gives him a sanction, at least, to examine the other singularities to which we make pretension. If he go back to the past history of the Jews, he will see in their wars the same unexampled preservation of their name and their nation. He will see them surviving the process of an actual transportation into another country. In short, he will see them to be unlike all other people in what observation offers, and authentic history records of them ; and the only concession that we demand of him, from all this, is, that their pretension to be unlike other people in their extraordinary revelations from heaven, is at least possible, and deserves to be inquired into.

13. It may not be out of place to expose a species of injustice which has often been done to the Christian argument. The defence of Christianity consists of several distinct arguments, which have sometimes been multiplied beyond what is necessary, and even sometimes beyond what is tenable. In addition to the main evidence which lies in the testimony given to the miracles of the gospel, there is the evidence of prophecy ; there is the evidence of collateral testimony ; there is the internal evidence. The argument under each of these heads is often made to undergo a further subdivision ; and it is not to be wondered at, that, in the multitude of observations, the defence of Christianity may often be made to rest upon ground, which, to say the least of it, is precarious or vulnerable. Now, the injustice which we complain of is, that when the friends of our religion are dislodged from some feeble outwork, raised by an unskilful officer in the cause, its enemies raise the cry of a decisive victory. But, for our own part, we could see her driven from all her defences, and surrender them without a sigh, so long as the phalanx of her historical and experimental evidence remains impenetrable. Behind this unscaled barrier, we could entrench ourselves, and eye the light skirmishing before us with no other sentiment than of regret, that our friends should, by the ignorance of their misplaced zeal, have given our enemies the appearance of a triumph.

14. Whatever opinion may be held as to the twofold interpretation of prophecy, though it were refuted by argument, and disgraced by ridicule, all that portion of evidence which lies in the numerous examples of literal and unambiguous fulfilment remains unaffected by it. Many there are, who deny the inspiration of the Song of Solomon. But in what possible way



does this affect the records of the evangelical history? Just as much as it affects the Lives of Plutarch, or the Annals of Tacitus. There are a thousand subjects on which infidels may idly push the triumph, and Christians be as idly galled by the severity, or even the truth of their observations. We point to the historical evidence for the New Testament, and ask them to dispose of it. It is there that we call them to the onset; for there lies one great strength of the Christian argument. It is true, that in the evidence of prophecy, we see a rising barrier, which, in the progress of centuries, may receive from time to time a new accumulation to the materials which form it. In this way, the evidence of prophecy may come in time to surpass the evidence of miracles. The restoration of the Jews will be the fulfilment of a clear prophecy, and form a proud and animating period in the history of our religion. "Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness!"

15. One singularly enamoured of the study of prophecy would find the topic unexhausted, even at the end of a life devoted to the intense prosecution of it. It were therefore well that with at least a few inquirers this were a selected and a favourite pursuit, and it is incumbent upon all to obtain a general acquaintance with the facts and principles of the subject. Horne, in his Introduction to the Scriptures, presents a good general outline of the study, and more especially of the authorship that would introduce us more at large into the details of it. Altogether it is a very rich and interesting field of contemplation, insomuch that some are to be met with who, unwilling to abandon it for any other, persist in cleaving to it as the most delightful of their literary employments.

16. There are certain theological studies which, if we are exclusively given up to them, might leave us unfurnished in all that is most valuable and most vital among the truths of Christianity. A skilful emendator of doubtful texts and readings of Scripture, for example, might after all but penetrate the shell, without ever once entering upon the substance of Divine knowledge. There are certain, too, of the outward credentials for the gospel, which might be mastered and explored by one who remains in profoundest ignorance as well as unconcern about the contents of the gospel. This is very possible in the study of the evidence from miracles; but it cannot well be with the evidence from prophecy—for this evidence we cannot in all its

fulness overtake without extensively ranging through the subject-matter of revelation, and so without coming into contact with all that is most important in Theology. In the Bible, doctrine and prophecy are so intermingled that, when in quest of the one, the other is unavoidably obtruded upon us. Instead of losing sight of the Saviour by this study, if rightly conducted, it will lead us to recognise Him in a thousand passages of the record where He had before escaped our observation. It connects and harmonizes the two dispensations—impressing on the Judaism of the Old the evangelical character of the New Testament; nor need we fear that, in this investigation, if but soundly prosecuted, we shall miss the great and essential principles of our faith—seeing that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

17. We should therefore fearlessly urge upon all inquirers the application of a considerable portion of their time and strength to the study of prophecy. It will bring perhaps more immediately to view, more perhaps than most other theological studies, the evident tokens of a God in the construction of that wondrous scheme whose remoter parts are found so well to correspond. It identifies in the mind the God of revelation with the God of nature and of history; and, apart altogether from the literary importance of the subject, we feel persuaded that, if investigated in a right spirit of seriousness, it may be mightily instrumental to the establishment of a strong and practical sense of religion in the heart of the inquirer.

18. At the commencement of this study, the best thing that can be done, is first to read all the actual prophecies of Scripture, to which, in Scripture or in common history, we have also corresponding fulfilments. Let each prophecy and its fulfilment be read together. We have a list of passages in Horne, containing the predictions of the Bible, and over against them a list of passages either from the Bible or other books which are supposed to narrate the counterpart accomplishment. We do not know that the study of prophecy is usually begun in this way. We fear not. But the advantage of it is incalculable. We should not only obtain a more correct and powerful impression of the evidence, as receiving it at first hand; but we should become habituated to the prophetic style and manner, and then could not fail to perceive that it has certain characteristics by which it may be described or by which it may be recognised. Like every other subject which has truth and consistency for its foundation,

it will be found to have a habit of its own, and a nomenclature of its own. Before we read so much as one explanation of its peculiar and symbolic language from any author, it were well to be familiarized to this and all the other peculiarities by actual converse with the prophecies themselves. However unpractised, this is quite the right and the commanding outset for these investigations; and it would place us on high vantage-ground, not merely for understanding the expositions of theologians, but also for sitting in the exercise of an independent judgment over them. In the mere work of comparing each prophecy with its recorded fulfilment, and one prophecy with another, we should receive a decided taste for the subject, and a strong impulse to the further prosecution of it; and then how much purer the taste, how much better directed must be the impulse, which is given by the *ipsissima verba* of Scripture, than if given by the plausibilities of some human speculation, by the fondness and the fascination of any theory. In short, it is better to enter on the analytic treatment of the subject, by reading this department of the Bible for ourselves, before we follow the synthetic treatment which any interpreter of the Bible might happen to have bestowed upon it. A previous acquaintance with the prophetic diction, gathered from the clearer prophecies, would give us mighty advantage, when we enter upon the investigation of the obscurer prophecies. We should be put thereby in possession of a cipher, not for unlocking all the secrets, but certainly for guiding us a certain way among the arcana of a labyrinth that, to an unpractised eye, looks utterly hopeless and inextricable. It is thus that the anterior study of Daniel serves at least to alleviate, to a certain extent, that aspect of impalpable mysteriousness which otherwise sits on the Book of Revelation.

19. Thus prepared, we should be in the best possible circumstances for perusing the books recommended by Horne on the figurative and symbolic language of prophecy, of which it has been well said by Van Mildert, late Bishop of Durham—"that it is almost a science in itself. None," says he, "can fully comprehend the depth, sublimity, and force of their writings, who are not thoroughly acquainted with the peculiar and appropriate imagery they were accustomed to use. This is the main key to many of the prophecies; and, without knowing how to apply it, the interpreter will often in vain essay to discover their hidden treasures." What makes it the more necessary to make a study of this, is that the symbol is not always, like the type,



founded upon resemblance—but, like sounds and written characters, may have a good deal in it of the merely conventional or arbitrary. Symbolical language is more a system of natural characters than ordinary language is, certainly; but the likeness between the sign and the thing signified is far from being so accurate as that between the type and the antitype—as, for example, when water, the effusion of which upon the Church is prophesied of by Isaiah, is made to denote the Holy Spirit; and the Temple, the human body; and a beast, as in Daniel and the Book of Revelation, an empire; and briars, the wicked, or the enemies of God; and Bridegroom, our Saviour as the Head of the mystical body; and candlestick, the Christian Church; and day, a year; and Dragon, an enemy who is invested with kingly power, hence, by pre-eminence, Satan; and heat, a persecution; and heaven, the political status of the rulers and grandees in society; and horn, the regal power; and Jerusalem, the city of the living God in paradise; and Jezebel, a seducer; and keys, the power of imprisonment or custody; and Sodom and Gomorrah, cities of apostasy and wickedness; and star, a potentate; and sun and moon, the civil and ecclesiastical state of Judea; and vine or vineyard, the Church of Israel; and woman, the body politic. In most of these instances, of which many more could be given, the natural resemblance is more or less obscured—so that, in the language of Dr. Hurd, they form representative marks rather than express pictures; and, instead of offering those complex and entire similarities which are held out to us in types, they are employed rather as characters approaching to the arbitrary, and suggesting, each of them, but one general idea to the mind.

20. We can understand a certain natural suspicion of something gratuitous and fanciful in all this. There is really no way either of confirming or of refuting this imagination, but by making the trial. Were a cipher to the old hieroglyphics of Egypt put into our hand, we can conceive the abstract and previous explanation of it to be met with the utmost incredulity. But all this would speedily be dissipated, if we found, on the actual application, that we could draw a consistent meaning out of the various inscriptions which we met with—and so of the cipher to prophecy, should we be enabled thereby, not only to read each prediction in an intelligible way, but in that way to make out a harmony between them and their respective fulfilments. Thus fortified, we should address ourselves with all the greater

confidence to the task of unravelling the obscure and yet unaccomplished prophecies; and, on the other hand, it is undeniable that should these at length evolve into histories, accordant with the principles of an interpretation applicable to them all, light must at length break out of this apparent darkness and mystery; and thus, enveloped in yet unopened enigmas, an immense mass of evidence may still be awaiting us.

21. There is one use which may be made of the symbolical language of prophecy. It might be employed as an argument by some for the purpose of doing away the doctrine of its having a double sense or a twofold accomplishment. Certain it is that this symbolic language does of itself give an air of exaggeration to the prophecy, even though it should have but one fulfilment; and so might lead the mind to look upon something ulterior, and something higher than the historical event, which viewed in its literalities seems to fall short of the magnificent diction wherein the prophecy which foretold it is invested. The fall of Jerusalem preceded by earthquakes and commotions, accompanied by signs from heaven, the obscuration of the sun and moon, and the precipitation of stars from their place in the firmament, and marked by the coming of the Son of Man in power and great glory—even this single event, it may be argued, exhausts the prophecy, when the reduction is made from the symbolic to the ordinary language. The only way of meeting this argument effectually is to invite an actual and detailed examination of the actual prophecies. And we shall make a good beginning by reading the prophecies which are instanced by Horne as prophecies of a double sense. We shall find it difficult to escape from the impression, first, of many anterior events in Scripture being typical of posterior ones; and so, secondly, when both the typical and antitypical event are predicted by one who lived prior to them both, of there being in that case a prophecy with a double sense. The most effectual method of deciding this controversy is, not by employing any generalities of illustration or argument, but simply by telling all the doubters or inquirers to come and see. We are quite aware that the doctrine of double prophecy is, in the first instance, often an offensive one to minds of strong rationality—shrewdly and suspiciously on their guard, against all the vagaries of wild imagination. Such a mind we conceive to have been that of Samuel Horsley; and accordingly, he set out in his prophetic studies with a strong inclination or rather antipathy

against a style of interpretation which, he conceived, would open the door to a caprice and a latitude that would be quite interminable. But he at length gave way to the evidence which met him on his path; and became one of the most powerful advocates for the doctrine of a double sense, not of course in all, but in many of the prophecies of Scripture. His four sermons on prophecy not only enlarge our conceptions of the whole scheme, but afford a substantial intellectual repast, distinguished as they are by all the characteristics of that independent and manly understanding which the author of them possessed. As well as Davison after him, he was made clearly to perceive that the double fulfilment, instead of facilitating the verification of the prophecy, multiplied the chances against it, and so brought out a more unequivocal indication of the Divine prescience and wisdom, both in the twofold harmony of the prediction with the two events, and in the harmony of these events with each other.

22. But while we make this stand for the double meaning and application of certain of these prophecies, let us again repeat that we do not rest upon these the main evidence which prophecy contributes for the vindication of the faith in the controversy with infidels. There are prophecies free of all the ambiguity which either a double interpretation or a symbolical language may be conceived to attach to them—literal and direct announcements followed up at the interval of centuries, by plainest possible history—prenunciations of the state of various people, as the Jews, and the Arabians, and the Egyptians, delivered thousands of years ago, and which, down to the present moment, offer the most striking graphic delineation of these people as they actually are—picturesque representations of the fate of cities which are named, but that give with all the accuracy of a Flemish picture, the vivid realities of their present situation, the fishermen that dry their nets on the rocks and rubbish of Tyre, the doleful creatures that nestle in the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh—all these couched in the terms of a literal description: and even when the prophecy assumes its own characteristic language, and becomes symbolical or figurative, it still is invested in a medium of sufficient transparency for our perceiving the marked accordancy between the general strain of prophecy in the book of revelation and the general progress of history in the book of experience. Who, for example, can resist the impression that the actual structure of the great European commonwealth is prefigured, and that at the distance of twenty-five



centuries, by the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image; or, in the sublime visions of the Apocalypse, by the ten horns surmounted with crowns which, transferred, as they are represented to have been, from the seven heads, mark in beautiful and impressive emblem the transference of power from imperial Rome to the separate monarchies that emerged into political being after its overthrow. These and such as these afford the strong points of the argument with infidelity; and it is not for the purpose of strengthening our defensive armour against the enemies of the faith, that we call for attention either to the double prophecies or the peculiarities of the prophetic style.

23. But though the study of these be of little use in the argument with infidels, it may be of the utmost use for guiding the deeper inquisition of Christians into the meaning of the unexplained or the unfulfilled prophecies. But from what has been said it must be obvious, that an immense preparation is necessary to warrant the adventurer who shall try to explore the secrets of futurity. The temerity of the unskilled novice is to be deprecated, who, seduced by the plausibility of some one conception of his own, would erect it into a principle of universal interpretation. There is an admirable maxim of Horsley upon this subject, which, whether well made out or not, from that passage on which he has bestowed a most original treatment, that "no prophecy is of private interpretation"—has in itself a great deal of soundness to recommend it. He tells us that no prophecy should be looked to singly, but that each should be regarded as the part of a mighty and comprehensive scheme—which scheme one would need to make the object of a wide and studious survey, ere he committed himself, unfurnished with the requisite lights, and the requisite charts or compass, to the ocean of unfulfilled prophecy. To lay an interdict on the search were to contravene the solemn words of Scripture itself—"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keepeth those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand." But the same authority which warrants the attempt hath issued also a most impressive warning on the danger of adding our own rash imaginations to the realities of Scripture—"If any man shall add to these things, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book"—a denunciation, we conceive, not merely against those who would annex to the book, words which are not in it, but who would graft confident interpretations thereupon, and so hold forth a substance and a mean-

ing which are not in it. It is truly the duty of every Christian student, earnestly but yet humbly and reverently, to inquire into the sense of these mysterious communications—yet with a due regard to the methods of prophecy, and a due sense of the vast inferiority between the thoughts and the ways of man, and the thoughts and the ways of God.\*

\* We so perfectly accord with the just and admirable sentiments of the author of the *Natural History of Enthusiasm* in this matter, that we cannot refrain from indulging ourselves, and, we are sure, gratifying our readers, with a few extracts from his chapter on the *Enthusiasm of Prophetical Interpretation*.

“A confident and dogmatical interpretation of those prophecies that are supposed to be on the eve of fulfilment, has manifestly a tendency thus to bring forth the wonders of the unseen world, and to connect them in sensible contact with the familiar objects and events of the present state. And such interpretations may be held with so full and overwhelming a persuasion of their truth, that heaven and its splendours may seem to stand at the door of our very homes:—to-morrow, perhaps, the hastening crisis of the nations shall lift the veil which so long has hidden the brightness of the eternal throne from mortal eyes:—each turn of public affairs; a war—a truce—a conspiracy—a royal marriage—may be the immediate precursor of that new era, wherein it shall no longer be true, as heretofore, that ‘the things eternal are unseen.’

“When an opinion—or we should rather say, a persuasion, of this imposing kind is entertained by a mind of more mobility than strength, and when it has acquired form, and consistency, and definiteness, by being long and incessantly the object of contemplation, it may easily gain exclusive possession of the mind; and a state of exclusive occupation of the thoughts by a single subject, if it be not real madness, differs little from it; for a man can hardly be called sane who is mastered by one set of ideas, and has lost the will or the power to break up the continuity of his musings.

“Whether or not this explanation be just, it is matter of fact that no species of enthusiasm has carried its victims nearer to the brink of insanity than that which originates in the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy. It need not be asked whether there is not some capital error on the side of many who have given themselves to this study; for the indications of egregious delusion have been of a kind not to be mistaken. There must be present some lurking mischief when the study of any part of Holy Scripture issues in extravagance of conduct, and in an offensive turgidness of language, and produces—not quietness and peace, but a wild and quaking looking for of impending wonders. There must be a fault of principle when the demeanour of Christians is such that those who occupy the place of the unlearned are excused when they say, ‘Ye are mad.’

“That some peculiar danger haunts this region of biblical inquiry is established by a double proof; for not only have men of exorbitant imaginations and feeble judgments rushed towards it instinctively and with the eagerness of infatuation; but sometimes the soundest understandings have lost, in these inquiries, their wonted discretion. At several periods of church-history, and again in our own times, multitudes have drunk to intoxication of the phial of prophetic interpretation; and, amid imagined peals of the mystic thunder, have become deaf to the voice both of common sense and of duty. The piety of such persons—if piety it may be called, has made them hunger and thirst, not for ‘the bread and water of life,’ but for the news of the political world. In such instances it may be confidently affirmed, previously to a hearing of the argument, that, even if the interpretation were true, it has been entangled with some knotted thread of egregious error.

“The proper remedy for this evil is not to be found in the timid or overbearing prohibitions of those who endeavour to prevent the mischief by interdicting inquiry; and who



24. One thing is undeniable, the inexpediency of bringing forward these doubtful explanations into the pulpit. And there is one baleful effect which has resulted from these abstruser speculations. They have not only taken up the room which rightfully belongs to the invitations of the gospel and the calls to repentance, but they have given the feeling, to a certain extent, that all this plain and practical preaching may now be given up in despair, because of the approaching certainty of that awful and inevitable doom which now impends over an unbelieving world. In other words, some have well-nigh given up the hope of any good from the ordinary means of praying, or of preaching, or of

would make it a sin or a folly for a Christian to ask the meaning of certain portions of Scripture. Cautions and restrictions of this nature are incompatible with the principles of Protestantism, as well as unnecessary, arrogant, and unavailing. If indeed man possessed any means of intrusion upon the mysteries of the upper world, or upon the secrets of futurity, there might be room to reprehend the audacity of those who should attempt to know by force or by importunity of research what has not been revealed. But when the unseen and the future are, by the spontaneous grace of heaven, in part set open—when a message, which might have been withheld, has been sent to earth, encircled with a benediction like this—‘Blessed are they that hear, and keep these words:’ then it may most safely be concluded that whatever is not marked with the seal of prohibition, is open to scrutiny. In truth, there is something incongruous in the notion of a *revelation* enveloped in restrictions. Be this as it may, it is certain that whoever would shut up the Scriptures, in whole or in part, from his fellow-disciples, or who affirms it to be unsafe or unwise to study such and such passages, is bound to show reasons of the most convincing kind for the exclusion. ‘What God has joined, let not man put asunder.’ But He has connected His blessing, comprehensively, with the study of His word. It may be left to the Romish Church to employ that faulty argument of captious arrogance, which prohibits the use of whatever may be abused. Unless, then, it can be shown that a divine interdiction encloses the prophetic portions of Scripture, it must be deemed an ill-judged and irreligious, though perhaps well intended usurpation, in any who assumes to plant his little rod of obstruction across the highway of revelation. . . . .

“The agitation which has recently taken place on the subject of prophecy, may perhaps, ere long, subside, and the Church may again acquiesce in its old sobrieties of opinion. And yet a different and better result of the existing controversy seems not altogether improbable; for when enthusiasm has raved itself into exhaustion, and has received from time the refutation of its precocious hopes; and when, on the other side, prosing mediocrity has uttered all its saws, and fallen back into its own slumber of contented ignorance, then the spirit of research and of legitimate curiosity, which no doubt has been diffused among not a few intelligent students of Scripture, may bring on a calm, a learned, and a productive discussion of the many great questions that belong to the undeveloped destiny of man. And it may be believed that the issue of such discussions will take its place among the means that shall concur to usher in a brighter age of Christianity. . . . .

“The study of those parts of Scripture which relate to futurity should therefore be undertaken with zeal, inspired by a reasonable hope of successful research; and at the same time with the modesty and resignation which must spring from a not unreasonable supposition—that all such researches may be fruitless. So long as this modesty is preserved—there will be no danger of enthusiastic excitements, whatever may be the opinions which we are led to entertain.”



circulating the Bible, or of sending forth missionaries—because of the great revolution that is now at hand, and which is to cut short all and to supersede all. It is thus that the incumbent precept for to-day is to be held in abeyance by the pictured futurities which some near or distant morrow is expected to realize; and far the worst direction, we apprehend, which these speculations have taken is—that, instead of waiting for the Lord in the attitude which Himself has prescribed—that is, in doing the work which He plainly and peremptorily lays upon them, they wait in a sort of mystic expectancy, during which all duty is suspended, and their own precarious imaginations are made to overbear the most express injunctions of the New Testament.

25. In justice, however, to one at least of their general views, let us state our own suspicion of what we hold to be a prevalent opinion, and by which we have no doubt the great majority of Christians is actuated. We cannot get the better of an impression, grounded on what we hold to be the general sense of Scripture, and which, we think, may be distinctly traced in many of its passages, that the next coming of the Saviour is not a coming to the final judgment on the day of the general resurrection. This we hold to be the faith of the great majority; and yet there is much in the Bible to discountenance it. In prophecy there is a distinct millennium foretold, nor do we see how this can be expunged from the future history of the Divine administration; and this indefinite period of peace and prosperous Christianity upon earth is to be ushered in, it would appear, not as the ultimate term of a progressive series, along the successive steps of which one nation is to be converted after another—till, in the triumphs of a universal faith, made out by the gradual advancement of light and knowledge to the uttermost ends of the world, the earth is at length to be transformed into the fair habitation of piety and righteousness. We would speak with diffidence; but as far as we can read into the prophecies of the time that is before us, we feel as if there was to be the arrest of a sudden and unlooked-for visitation to be laid on the ordinary processes of nature and history; and that the millennium is to be ushered in in the midst of judgments, and desolations, and frightful convulsions which will uproot the present fabric of society, and shake the framework of its machinery into pieces. It is still as much the part of missionaries to carry the gospel unto every people under heaven, as it was of the apostolic

missionaries who went forth over all the then known world, previous to the destruction of Jerusalem. But though in these days they preached it universally, they did not plant it universally; and in like manner, we can imagine now a general publication without a general conversion of the nations, and that, instead of a diffused and universal Christianity being anterior to the next coming of the Saviour, that coming may be in judgment and sore displeasure on the irreligion and apostasy of a world that had now prepared itself for the outpourings of an accumulated wrath, by its continued resistance to all the ordinary demonstrations. Instead of a diffused and universal Christianity being anterior to the next coming of the Saviour, that coming itself may be anterior to a diffused and universal Christianity—to the restoration of the Jews, and the consequent fulness of the Gentiles. We speak not of a personal coming: there was none such at the destruction of Jerusalem, though it seems at least as if the Son of Man was then said to come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. But certain it is, that a coming is spoken of as yet in reserve, when, instead of being met by the glad acclamations of a Christianized world, He will come like a thief in the night, and with sudden destruction as with a whirlwind—when, as in the days of Noah and Lot, He will abruptly terminate the festivities and the schemes, and the busy occupations of a secure and wholly secular generation—and, so far from coming down on a regenerated species, then waiting in joyful expectancy for their King, it is asked whether, when this descent, whatever it may be, is accomplished, “Verily shall the Son of Man find faith upon the earth?” We say this not in full confidence or for the purpose of dogmatizing any, but for the purpose of exciting all to an inquiry of deepest interest; and we should not advise a perusal of the more recent interpreters of prophecy till Mede, and Chandler, and Newton, and Hurd, and Horsley, and Davison, have become familiar to them. Then may they address themselves to the lucubrations of Cuninghame, and Faber, and Irving, and M’Neile, and Bickersteth. The little work of the last-mentioned author is written with so much caution, and is at the same time so pervaded by the unction of personal Christianity, that it may with all safety be made the subject of an immediate perusal.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE TRUTH OF A MIRACLE, AND THE TRUTH OF  
THE DOCTRINE IN SUPPORT OF WHICH IT IS PERFORMED.

1. FOR man to affirm that nothing short of omnipotence can suspend the laws of visible nature, would seem to presume a far more extended acquaintance with nature and with the universe than in fact belongs to him. For ourselves, we can perceive nothing like self-evidence in such an assertion. We cannot tell what be the orders of power and of intelligence between us and God. We do not know either the limits or the extent of their agency in the affairs of this lower world. It appears to us a monstrous presumption to affirm, that no archangel, no secondary or intermediate being whatever, can perform a miracle. We, in fact, transgress the line of separation between the known and the unknown, when we make either a confident affirmation, or a confident denial upon this subject. It is one of those things which are placed on the *terra incognita* beyond us; and it would comport more with the soundness and modesty of true science, just to acknowledge that we cannot say. What do we know about the constitution of the universe, or the concatenations of universal being; and, though warranted to believe in a supreme and all-powerful God, is it for us to define the amount of permission or of delegated power He may have vested in the creatures who are beneath Him?

2. But at this rate, how shall we be sure of a miracle being the voucher of a messenger from God? For aught we know, it may proceed from the foul machination of a powerful but wicked spirit, bent on some infernal experiment of deceit and cruelty. That very Bible, which stands pillared on its own miraculous evidence, affirms the existence of such beings, and actuated too by a mischievous policy, the object of which is to inthral and destroy our species. Nay, we read there of lying spirits; of wonders by enchantment, which, according to the literal description of them, are to all intents and purposes miracles; of possessions by spirits of superior force and intelligence, insomuch that they imparted both a preternatural knowledge, and a preternatural strength to those whom they occupied. Now there is a per-



plexity here which requires much thought and argument to unravel. It certainly tends to obscure the connexion between the truth of a miracle, and the truth of the doctrine which is sanctioned by it. It is on the adjustment of this question that the English writers on miracles have expended, we think, the most of their strength; and, while in Scotland the great labour has been to dissipate the sophistries of Hume, and so to vindicate the Christian miracles as sufficiently ascertained facts—in the sister kingdom it has been, admitting them as facts, to vindicate them as real credentials from the God of heaven, and so as competent vouchers for that system of religion wherewith they are associated.

3. We can be at no loss to perceive what the tenets are, which in this walk of theological speculation the controvertists on either side must, for the sake of consistency, make to stand or to fall together. They, on the one hand, who affirm that the bare fact of a miracle is in itself the instant and decisive token of an immediate forthputting by the hand of God, must explain away the feats of the Egyptian magicians in the days of Moses; must explain away the demoniacal possessions of the New Testament; must explain away certain precepts and narratives of the Old, as a certain passage for example in the history of Saul, and a precept too which recognises false miracles by the hand of false prophets. The divinations before king Pharaoh by the wise men of his court have been resolved into a successful legerdemain; the ejection of evil spirits by our Saviour has been resolved into the cure of certain diseases; the preternatural appearances and doings of wicked angels, however simply and literally recorded, have been resolved into dreams, or, like the history of the fall, into mere figurative description—and all for the purpose of harmonizing those various passages with their own theory, that a miracle can never happen without God being immediately in it; and that, therefore, when associated with the promulgation of a doctrine, His faithfulness is staked to the truth of it—when associated with the utterance of a threat or a promise, His power is staked to the fulfilment of it.

4. All this would tend no doubt to simplify the evidences of Christianity, and to supersede a question in the adjustment of which there might be some difficulty. It would follow that the bare fact of a miracle must at once accredit a revelation; and that for the purpose of confirming the evidence, all further inquiry is foreclosed, because altogether unnecessary. Yet one

cannot help the question, what ought to be the effect, if in such a revelation, there did occur what one knew to be a historical, or what he irresistibly believed to be a mathematical falsity?—or what, if possible, would be more startling still, if it proclaimed a code of morality the reverse of all which conscience now holds to be sacred, of all which man is at present led by his most urgent sense of obligation to revere? Were this a mere hypothetical question, we might spare ourselves the pains of laying a difficulty conjured up by our own imagination. But Scripture itself gives countenance to the speculation; for, so far from dismissing the question as unworthy of all consideration, it is a question which itself has entertained, and to which it has deigned a reply. And the principle of that reply which silenced the old adversaries will still be of avail to silence the present adversaries of the faith. Of itself perhaps it may be a subordinate question; yet sound and important principle may be concerned in the solution of it—and, however little the practical necessity may be for any deliverance on the subject, still it is precisely that subject, the right management of which might shed an illustration over the *rationale* of the Christian evidences.

5. In entering then on as succinct an exposition of this matter as possible, the very first remark which occurs to us is, that it does appear *ultra vires* on the part of man, to affirm of every miracle, that, because a miracle, it must proceed from the immediate finger or fiat of God. Is it in the spirit, we ask, either of Butler or Bacon, to make this confident affirmation? What is it that invests us with the mighty intelligence of knowing either the extent or the limit of those faculties which belong to the powers, and the principalities, and the higher orders of being that ascend, in upward gradation, between us and God? Does either the experience of our little day, but a moment on the high scale of eternity; or the observation of our narrow sphere, but an atom in the peopled immensity of worlds that are around us,—Do these entitle us to pronounce on the movements that take place in a universal economy of things, or to say how the parts are affected, and how they are implicated with each other? All that we have ever been led to regard as sound philosophy is utterly at antipodes with such a presumption as this. It teaches to value the information of the senses, and to value the solid informations of history. This is the philosophy of facts, and has no fellowship with that mere notional philosophy which has nothing but gratuitous imaginations to rest upon. It is of the

latter and not of the former philosophy that, when a miracle is evolved upon the platform of our visible world, we should pronounce on the operation behind the curtain which gave birth to it ; or with confidence tell whether it was done by an immediate mandate from God, or by the spontaneous act of some subordinate but lofty creature stationed somewhere along that vast interval which separates man from the Deity. It is a matter altogether beyond our sphere, and therefore, to every apprehension of ours, it would comport better with the modesty of true science, to say in the first instance, that God must have the power of making invasion on the laws of visible nature ; but to say also, in the second instance, that for aught we know, God may have permitted the exercise of a like power to the angels or the arch-angels who are beneath him.

6. But there is another presumption no less revolting to our taste, in the advocates of that system to which we now refer. Why all this tampering with the plain and obvious literalities of Scripture ? How is it possible, without giving up the authority of the record, to reduce these demoniacal possessions to diseases ? On this subject we should value the impression, the unsophisticated impression of a plain and simple cottager, before the opinion of all the nosologists ; nor can the pompous nomenclature of all their demonstrations ever reconcile us to such a glaring violation, as some have attempted to practise on a narrative which tells us of the spirits that held converse with the Saviour ; that supplicated His forbearance ; that, on their part, told how they knew Him, and, on His part, were charged to be silent ; and that, when displaced from their old receptacles by the word of His power, entered by permission into other receptacles where they made demonstration both of the power and malignity which belonged to them. These are mysteries, no doubt—as everything is which belongs in part to the seen, and in part to the unseen world. But they have also come down to us in the light of palpable facts, grounded on sensible and historical evidence. And to refuse a fact thus authenticated, because of the unexplained or perhaps inexplicable mysteriousness involved in it, appears very clearly to ourselves a transgression both of sound philosophy and of sound faith.

7. The question then is still unresolved. If, for aught we know, an evil spirit may effect a miracle—how comes a miracle, and in what circumstances, to be the token of a revelation from God ? This question may be treated under three distinct sup-



positions, which, if satisfactorily disposed of, would exhaust the whole argument.

8. First, there are imaginable circumstances in which a miracle would carry no such indication along with it. If staked, for example, to a professed revelation which canonized cruelty, and deceit, and licentiousness as so many virtues, or which proclaimed as truths that which we certainly knew to be historical or mathematical falsehoods; this would clearly devolve the whole credit of the miracle on some wicked but powerful spirit who either plotted some infernal mischief to our species, or delighted in practising a mockery on the hopes and the principles of mankind.

9. But, secondly, if, on the other hand, the revelation in question was characterized throughout by a pure and unchanging morality; if from the beginning to the end of it there was one reigning, and sustained, and consistent impression of sacredness; if there sat an obvious truth and dignity upon all its pages; above everything, if such were its doctrine, and such its precepts, that a belief in the one, and a steadfast observation of the other, exalted the character of man, and in proportion as they prevailed, made of mankind a happy and healthful society—we could not but recognise both the goodness and honesty of the living power that achieved these miracles; and, if in the bosom of the revelation that power was declared to be God, we could not but accept of all the moral characteristics wherewith the book was so obviously pervaded, as guarantees for the truth of its own information—that it came from God, and that it was God whose will and whose wisdom had inspired it.

10. But, thirdly, there is a middle supposition between these two extreme ones. In our treatment of both the first suppositions, we evidently go on the presumption that God is righteous. Ere we address ourselves to the task of examining either the one or the other professed revelation that we have just been imagining, we are preoccupied with the sense of God, as a God of equity and truth; and on this principle our decision, in fact, is suspended. We cannot, on the one hand, defer to the claims of a professed revelation, even though offered on the sanction of miracles, to have God for its author, if malignity and falsehood be graven upon its pages; and why?—because all our preconceptions of the Deity are on the side of His benignity and His faithfulness. We, on the other hand, could most readily surrender to it our faith and our obedience, if, after having witnessed or been

convinced of its miracles, we saw that through all its passages, it was instinct with the purest morality ; and why?—because if the discordancy between its characteristics, and our previous notions of the character of God, led us to reject the first, even in spite of the miracles that accompanied it—so the accordancy between its characteristics and these previous notions of the Divine character, lifts as it were the burden of this deduction off from the miracles, and leaves to them all that force and authority which properly belong to them. But by our present, or third supposition, a revelation might be imagined which offered to our notice no moral characteristics whatever ; which touched not at all on an ethical subject or principle of any kind ; which confined itself to the bare announcement, we shall suppose, of facts relative to the existence of things that lay without the sphere of our own previous observation or knowledge—but withal having miracles to which it could appeal as the vouchers for its authenticity. Would miracles alone, it might be asked, having neither an evil morality in their message to upset their authority, nor a good morality to confirm it—would these alone substantiate the claims of a professed revelation ? We hold that they would, but still because of the presumptions with which we are occupied in regard to the truth and benevolence of the Deity—believing, as we do, in the absence of every indication that marked the agency of a wicked spirit in the offered communication, that He would not lend Himself either by permission to others, or by the direct exercise of His own power, to the deception of His creatures. On each of the three suppositions, then, there is a prior natural religion which mingles the influence of its presumptions in the matter, and so modifies the resulting conclusion, whatever that may be. It is on the strength of this natural religion, and at the instigation of its principles, that we would reject a professed revelation charged either with obvious immorality or falsehood, even though in the face of undoubted miracles. It is on the strength also of this natural religion, that when, instead of being disgraced with aught so unseemly as this, the venerable signatures of truth and holiness are throughout conspicuous, that we defer to the miraculous evidence, and hold it all the stronger that the morality and the miracles go hand in hand. But even as we have said, though neither a good nor a bad morality stood associated with the message, still on the strength of natural religion would we defer to the authority of the miracles alone. If but simply relieved from the presence of

aught that might indicate the agency of an evil though powerful spirit, and though it gave no indication of a moral character in itself—resting on the external voucher of its miracles alone—we should hold it a sufficient and a satisfying voucher of its having proceeded from that good and great Spirit who presides over the universe, and has the absolute command of all its energies. And still it is a previous natural religion that would guide us to the conclusion. It is in virtue of its propositions that we cannot think of a message thus attested, and having in itself no marks of deceit or turpitude by which to betray its unworthy origin,—we cannot think of such a message ushered in by miracles, or having miracles in its train, proceeding from any other than the Lord of nature, and more especially if it be from Him that it professes to have come. This is the natural conclusion; and if there be nought to thwart or overbear it in the substance or circumstances of the communication, then on the simple removal of this disturbing force miracles are restored to the proper and legitimate effect which belongs to them.

11. We are aware that in this view of the matter a previous natural religion would seem to be indispensable; whereas, in the other view of it, the whole credit and authority that belong to the Christian religion would have their primary fountain-head in the proper and peculiar evidences of revelation. Miracles, simply as such, and without regard to adjuncts at all, were enough, in all conceivable circumstances, to authenticate any professed communication from God to the world. The historical evidence for these miraculous facts were enough of themselves to constitute a simple but solid foundation on which to rest the whole superstructure of our creed. We confess our partiality, in other days, to what we held as a beautiful and consistent exemplification of the question between us and infidels. There is nothing, however, which has contributed more to modify our views upon this subject than the very question whereof we now treat. Instead of holding all religion as suspended on the miraculous evidence, we see this evidence itself standing at the bar of an anterior principle, and there waiting for its authentication. There is a previous natural religion on whose aid we call for the determination of this matter. It is an authority that we at one time should have utterly disregarded and contemned; but now hold it in higher reverence, since, reflecting on the supremacy of conscience within us, we deem this to be the token



of an ascendent principle of morality and truth in the universe around us.

12. Now the charge which has been preferred against those who would require the doctrine to be such as neither to contravene any known truth, nor any obvious and universal principle of morality, is as follows. They say that it is first proving the miracle to have come from God by the doctrine, and then the doctrine to have come from Him by the miracle. But the argument is altogether free of any such vicious circulation. Let the doctrine have immorality or obvious falsehood attached to it, and then it is insusceptible of being proved by miraculous evidence to have come from God. We require the immorality and the falsehood to be removed from the doctrine—not to prove it, but to give it the susceptibility of being proved. The mere absence of any contradiction to morality or known truth will not itself prove the doctrine; but it will make the doctrine capable of being proved. It clears the way for the effect of the proper evidence. Now that proper evidence is the miracle—an evidence that could not have overcome the barrier either of known truth or of palpable immorality, but, when this barrier is done away, works its full effect in favour of the doctrine at issue. The removal of a barrier is not tantamount to the rendering of a proof. It only affords room for the proof. There is no vicious circulation here. Though a miracle can demonstrate nothing in opposition to the evidence of the external senses, or even to the evidence of the moral sense that is within—yet, when all hostility from these quarters is displaced, a miracle, thus freed from the adverse or the disturbing force that would else have neutralized it, may in truth be the most effective of all demonstrations.

13. Now, to descend from the general or abstract form of the argument, let us inquire for a moment how it actually is with Christianity. It is already well known how it has been vindicated by Butler from the charge of certain immoralities where-with it has been represented as bound up, because in the Old Testament the children of Israel are said to have had the sanction of the Divinity for borrowing from the Egyptians what they never did repay, and for the total extermination of a people of whose land they took violent possession.\* Let us accept of this

\* “It is the province of reason to judge of the morality of the Scripture . . . whether it contains things plainly contradictory to wisdom, justice, or goodness, to what the light of nature teaches us of God. And I know nothing of this sort objected against Scripture, ex-

vindication, and attend for the time to nothing positive on the side of Christianity, because of the transcendently pure and perfect morality which radiates from all its pages. Then this would place Christianity on the level of our middle or third supposition, under which we conceived, in the case of some professed revelation—that, touching not on morality at all, there was neither a good morality that could be alleged in its favour, nor an evil that could be alleged to its prejudice or discredit. We have already stated how a miracle performed on this wholly neutral ground, would exhibit a strongly affirmative argument in behalf of all which its performer claimed; and that any doctrine or information of his thus sanctioned, appealing as it does to a miracle as the voucher of its Divine origin, might with all safety be accepted as indeed the very doctrine or information which God himself has been pleased to set before us. Christianity, in spite of every exception which has been taken against it, stands clearly at least as high as this—that is, in a condition to be proved by miracles, even though the positive excellence of its ethical system had not placed it on a far surer and higher vantage-ground.

14. For what is the real state of the case in regard to our receiving such objections as are formed upon suppositions, which would equally conclude that the constitution of nature is contradictory to wisdom, justice, or goodness, which most certainly it is not. Indeed there are some particular precepts in Scripture, given to particular persons, requiring actions which would be immoral and vicious were it not for such precepts. But it is easy to see, that all these are of such a kind as that the precept changes the whole nature of the case and of the action; and both constitutes and shows that not to be unjust or immoral, which, prior to the precept, must have appeared and really have been so; which may well be, since none of these precepts are contrary to immutable morality. If it were commanded to cultivate the principles, and act from the spirit of treachery, ingratitude, cruelty; the command would not alter the nature of the case or of the action in any of these instances. But it is quite otherwise in precepts which require only the doing an external action; for instance, taking away the property or life of any. For men have no right to either life or property, but what arises solely from the grant of God. When this grant is revoked, they cease to have any right at all in either. And when this revocation is made known, as surely it is possible it may be, it must cease to be unjust to deprive them of either. And though a course of external acts, which without command would be immoral, must make an immoral habit; yet a few detached commands have no such natural tendency. I thought proper to say thus much of the few Scripture precepts, which require not vicious actions, but actions which would have been vicious had it not been for such precepts; because they are sometimes weakly urged as immoral, and great weight is laid upon objections drawn from them. But to me there seems no difficulty at all in these precepts, but what arises from their being offences—*i.e.*, from their being liable to be perverted, as indeed they are by wicked designing men, to serve the most horrid purposes; and perhaps to mislead the weak and enthusiastic. And objections from this head are not objections against revelation; but against the whole notion of religion as a trial; and against the general constitution of nature.”—Butler’s *Analogy*, part ii. chap. iii.

ligion—breathing throughout a morality, which, if in universal practice among men, would turn the earth we live in to a paradise—breaking forth through the mists of surrounding illiberality and prejudice with a lustre, and an expansion, and a purity, in broadest possible contrast with the conceptions and habitudes of the age—instead of thwarting the miraculous evidence by any painful dissonancy between its spirit and what we hold to be the spirit and character of God, superadding, in fact, the evidence of one sort of miracle to another, so that we do not wonder more at the men for the mighty works which they did, than for the noble and elevated system both of social and Divine morality which they inculcated. There may be some difficulty in the speculative adjustment of this question; but in the specific case of Christianity, there is no practical difficulty at all. There is, in fact, no adjustment called for. The miracles and the morals of the gospel, instead of conflicting are conspiring forces, and stand side by side as harmonious witnesses of its having sprung from that mighty and unseen Being who unites in His nature the highest power with the highest goodness.

15. It has long struck us that there is a great accordancy between this question, and one that has given rise to no small perplexity and difference of opinion in moral science. It is well known that there are two different systems on the origin of virtue—one in which it is represented as having a native and independent rightness in itself, independent of all legislation; and another in which the will of God is represented as the primary fountainhead of all moral obligation. Now, it is conceivable that He might have put forth His authority so as to have enjoined that which is morally evil. And thus a question might have arisen, not whether it was our interest—for that must be our interest which recommends us to favour and good-will from the Supreme Power of the universe—but whether it was our duty to obey God when with the voice of a master, and all the sanctions of a legal authority, He commands that which morally is wrong. It is enough to originate the question, that God's legal right to command, and the rightness of that which He hath commanded are separable in idea; but surely we might save ourselves all the embarrassment and fatigue of such a question, if they are never separated in fact. It is a question which He hath never laid us under the practical necessity of resolving. The unfailing consistency that obtains under His government between the legal right and the moral rectitude,



may well excuse us from all the pains and perplexities of an argument that is merely speculative : and we have nothing for it but to rejoice, that in the high and heavenly administration under which we sit, supreme power and supreme rectitude are at one ; that He who is throned in irreversible judgment is also in justice unerring and inflexible ; that with one and the same Being are conjoined the legal right to command, and that nature of perfect virtue which insures a perfect rightness to all the commandments ; and therefore, instead of puzzling and pronouncing upon our own arbitrary imaginations, let us never cease to admire the actual economy which hath been instituted over us, and that we can say of Him who hath ordained it, "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right."

16. If it be our duty to obey God, it is also our duty to believe in Him. The supposition might be put that He affirmed what we held to be mathematically untrue ; that He uttered a proposition which we irresistibly, and by the constitution of our understanding were led to regard as false ; and so the question might again be agitated, whether in this case it were incumbent upon us to resign our convictions to the authority of His saying. It is surely enough to cut short this perplexity that God cannot lie, and that we should not waste our intellect on the impossibilities of an airy and hypothetical region. Now what is true of this second puzzle, is equally true of the first one. He might be conceived to enjoin by authority that which all men by the constitution of their moral nature agreed in regarding as a crime ; and so casuistry be put upon her shifts to resolve an entanglement of her own making. But it were altogether endless to unriddle all these self-created difficulties ; and therefore, as the Psalmist gave thanks at the remembrance of the holiness of God, so ought we to be thankful that the law written in the heart harmonizes with the law written in the book of an express revelation ; that the lessons of the vicegerent within so correspond to the lessons of every inspired visitant from the upper sanctuary ; that to the voice from above there is an echo in the hearts and consciences of the men who are below ; and that the moral judgment which springeth up from human bosoms upon earth reflects so accurately the righteousness that looketh down upon them from heaven.

17. "The law of the Lord is perfect," "the statutes of the Lord are right," "the commandment of the Lord is pure," "the judgments of the Lord are altogether true and righteous,"—

these passages not only announce to us the prerogative of God as a lawgiver, but they announce to us the pure and righteous character of the enactments which proceed from Him. They tell us not only that He has the right of judgment, but, which is a distinct thing, they tell us that His judgments are right. They not only pronounce Him to have legally the right of commanding, but they pronounce of what He hath commanded that it is right morally; and often, in Scripture, instead of standing upon His prerogative as the argument upon which He might exact our obedience, He appeals to the goodness or the rectitude of His law as the argument upon which He might persuade us to obedience. "Children," says the apostle, "obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right,"—not then on the naked plea of authority, not because it is for Him to be the absolute sovereign and for us to yield a passive and unquestioning obedience; but also because, upon the moral cognizance that we ourselves take of the precept, we can discern the rightness of it.

18. It is well that God's right to command, and the rightness of God's commandments, are each of them so perfect in itself, and both of them so thoroughly adjusted the one to the other. The opposite state of things might be imagined, though, fortunately for us and for the universe of which we make a part, it has not been realized. Still one could figure a being who sat upon a throne of supremacy, and with that right of property in all things, which the act of their creation and the power of again sweeping them into the nonentity from which they were summoned, are supposed to confer—a being who had endued us with just moral susceptibilities, yet with a tyrant's caprice, thwarted every sense that he himself had given of the distinction between good and evil, by setting up a law of revelation that was at variance with the law of the heart—a being who utterly reversed the characteristics of our own benign and venerable Deity, and bade us do the iniquity which he himself did love, and trample on the righteousness which he himself hated and despised—all this might certainly be imagined, a wild insurrectionary violence between the principles of virtue that he had put within, and the irreconcilable precepts that with authority and menace he had suspended over us; the generous and high-minded revolt of all our better feelings, which rose to indignant mutiny against the base, and worthless, and arbitrary dictates of him, whose only claim to our obedience was, that in his hands there lay the irresistible strength which could either agonize or could destroy. In

these circumstances there is room for the question, if such a monarch, even though divine and omnipotent, had the right to command, or if it would be right in his subjects to obey; and such might be the discrepancy between these two elements of the legal and the moral right, that each might neutralize the other, and the sound that fell on the mental ear be as distinct as were the discord of two rival and conflicting voices. We therefore repeat it as a theme of high gratulation to the creatures of our existing universe, that these elements are at one; that the testimonies which have come down to us from heaven's sanctuary, harmonize with the testimonies that issue from the recesses of the human conscience; that the enactments which go forth from the seat of jurisdiction, occupied by the actual and the reigning power, all bear upon them the high impress of principle; and that we are not only able to say of God, that He is rightfully the Judge of the whole earth, because to Him belong the earth and the fulness thereof, but we are further able to say that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

19. Now under another government this state of things might be reversed. The thing can at least be imagined by us—a reigning power all whose moral characteristics were in direct opposition to those of our all-perfect and presiding Deity. He could have given us the moral perceptions that we now have; and, in most painful and perplexing variance with the tendencies of our nature, he could have utterly traversed them by the final issues of his administration. In the hands of such a ruler and such a proprietor, the good and the bad might have changed destinies, and a law been instituted, all whose sanctions were on the side of vice, and arrayed against virtue in the world. Then with the principles that we now have, our approbation would still have been to what is morally right, while our obligation, as far as the authority of the Divine law was concerned, would have been to what is morally wrong. The one would have run counter to the other. They would have drawn the perplexed and agitated spirit in opposite directions. On one and the same action, there would descend the praises of the righteous and the penalties of an unrighteous God; and in very proportion to the force and the terror of these penalties would there be a louder testimony to the resolute and the high-minded integrity of him who braved them. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*, is the sublime of moral heroism; and it would raise this noble characteristic to the uttermost degree of its enhancement, that even when thun-



der from heaven's throne was brought to overpower the determinations of rectitude, it was found to be invincible.

20. On this subject we would further refer the inquirer to *Le Bas on Miracles*—a work of great strength and originality; and altogether of a superior character, both in point of substance and of expression. Like Penrose, of whom he is the reviewer, he addresses himself chiefly to the question of the ligament between the fact of a miracle, and the truth of the doctrine for which it is the voucher—or whether a miracle is in all cases the seal of an attestation from God.

## BOOK III.

### ON THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### ON THE CONSISTENCY OF SCRIPTURE WITH ITSELF AND WITH CONTEMPORARY AUTHORSHIP.

1. It is not at all times possible to obtain a precise adjustment between the actual state of things in nature, and the definitions of our own artificial philosophy. There are often certain rebellious and intractable phenomena which do not fully and properly belong either to one division or another ; and, just from the impossibility of an exact classification, we fail in our attempts completely to accommodate our schemes of universal science to the scheme of the existent universe. The line of demarcation between cognate subjects and cognate sciences, is often obscured by things of a common or ambiguous character, which partially belong to each, but fully belong to neither. Thus, for example, there are certain anomalies which serve to obliterate somewhat the distinction between the animal and the vegetable kingdom. Thus, too, there is a midway—a debatable ground between the sciences of chemistry and natural philosophy. There are many other instances which might be specified—all serving to show that it is not by an immediate transition that we pass from one branch of philosophy to another. There is what painters would call a shading off between them. They do not pass *instantly* into each other by lines, the mathematical definition of which is length without breadth. But they melt into each other by stripes or margins of separation, across which intermediate boundary, the colour or character of the one region gradually dies away, till it fully emerges into the distinct colour and character of the other region.

2. What has suggested these observations is, that, in attempting to distinguish the internal from the external evidences of Christianity, we perceive the same sort of hazy undefined border between them, that there is between so many of the other contiguous provinces of human thought. The two kinds of evidence, in fact, run very much into each other. If it be meant of the external evidences for the truth of the Bible, that they are such as are gathered from places without the book, and of the internal that they are gathered from places within the book, it will be found of its largest and strongest evidence, that it comes not properly or fully under either the one head or the other. We scarcely know of any evidence purely external, but that which lies in the testimonies of writers not scriptural, to the existence and the authority and the early date and the reputed writers of Scripture. And we scarcely know of any evidence purely internal, but that which is founded on the consistency of Scripture with itself, on the characteristics of honesty which may be more or less obviously discerned in it, and perhaps on the pure and right morality whether of its sentiments or precepts. It will be found of most other evidence that, instead of being drawn exclusively from either that which is without or that which is within the Bible, it is in fact elicited by the comparison of the one with the other. In estimating the force of the argument, for example, founded on the references of the early Fathers to Scripture, and even on their testimonies to the miracles which are recorded there, there is the comparison of that which is said out of the Bible, with that which is said in it; and the mind must have respect to the contents of the book, when attending to the credentials by which they are thus verified. Again, when a credibility is founded on the accordance which there is between the Bible and history, in those numerous allusions which it makes to the state and customs and various circumstances of the age in which it was written—this too, though perhaps commonly ranking as an internal evidence, presupposes a comparison between that which is within and that which is without the record. Even that credibility so commonly spoken of as internal, which is drawn from the accordance of Bible statements with the felt state of man and of all his moral and spiritual necessities, rests on the comparison of the scriptural with the ex-scriptural—of that which is graven on the tablet of revelation, with that which is graven on the tablet of the human heart. The evidence, too, that lies in the suitable representa-



tions which the Bible gives of the character and ways of God, requires that we should look not only to that which is in the book, but also to that which is separate from the book ; to compare the notions of God which are drawn purely from revelation, with the notions which are drawn from other sources of human opinion or knowledge. Notwithstanding the current and familiar style in which we talk of external and internal evidences for the truth of revelation, as if we perfectly understood what we were saying, there is a real difficulty in tracing the precise line of demarcation between them.

3. But we are not bound to task ourselves with the labour of bringing about an adjustment between the real state of the case on the one hand, and the arbitrary names or distinctions which our predecessors may have devised in the work of investigating it. Yet, in vindication of the title which we have prefixed to this book, it will be necessary to explain in what sense the various matters discussed in it should be brought within the department of the internal evidences. They all agree in this, that they have respect to the subject-matter of the Bible ; but to a great deal more regarding this subject-matter than to the consistency of its various parts with each other. Beside this, we found an argument on the consistency of that which is within the record, with that which is external to the record—of which last, however, it is necessary that we should have the distinct and independent knowledge. There may be a perfect consistency between what the Bible tells us of angels, and what is objectively or externally true in regard to them. But we have no independent knowledge of this order of beings, and can find no evidence therefore on this information of the Bible—to which our only access is through the pages of the Bible itself. Whenever an evidence is founded on the harmony which obtains between the depositions of Scripture respecting certain things and the actual state of these things, we must have other means by which we know of these things than Scripture itself ; and so the argument is made to rest on the coincidence which obtains between the statements of the Bible, and what we know of the truth of these statements from other sources. Yet one of these sources must be excepted, else we shall lose the distinction between the internal and the external evidences. The Bible announces to us its own miracles, beside furnishing us with certain traces both of its own antiquity, and of the authors by whom it was penned. Its testimony in these matters is corro-

borated by the testimony of other and ex-scriptural authors ; and the strength of this latter testimony forms the main strength of the external evidence for the truth of the Christian revelation. Let us exclude this, and there remains an internal evidence—a great part of which is grounded, like the external, on a comparison between what we learn in the Bible, and what we know apart from the Bible ; yet distinguished from the external, in that the knowledge is ours through another medium than the testimony of authors, deponing historically, either to the antiquity and genuineness and reception of the Bible, or to those miracles which constitute the first and most palpable vouchers for its authority. Our knowledge of God, our knowledge of the morally right and wrong, our knowledge of our own hearts, our knowledge even of human life and character as grounded chiefly on personal observation—are all otherwise derived than from the testimony of historians ; and on the consistency between all this knowledge and the subject-matter of the Bible, there is founded a great part of what is commonly recognised as internal evidence. It seems in most instances to receive this appellation of internal, when the subject-matter of the Bible is brought immediately to the tribunal of a man's own sense and a man's own judgment—whether it is to the light of conscience and consciousness, or to the light of a well-exercised discernment into human character and affairs. Were we to avail ourselves of the distinction here between the truths of instruction and those of information, we should say of all the argument which is founded on the harmony between Scripture and the former class of truths, that it belongs to the department of the internal—whereas, when founded on the harmony between Scripture and the latter class of truths, it belongs to the department of the external evidences. Yet such is the difficulty of framing an unexceptionable definition on this subject, that, on the one hand, the agreement between the subject-matter of the Bible and the informations of Josephus and other Jewish or profane authors, is referred to the head of the internal evidences ; and on the other hand, though a stronger argument for the miracles of the New Testament may be gathered, as we have abundantly endeavoured to show, from within than from without the canon, from the original testimony of scriptural than from the subsequent testimony of ex-scriptural writers—yet is the whole of this argument referred to the department of the external evidences.

4. But whether we succeed or not in this work of classification,

it does not affect the substantive reality and strength of the various branches of evidence, however they may have been grouped when we view them separately. There is, however, one general remark applicable to almost all the evidence for Christianity, and which we are unwilling to pass over. It is well known that the defenders of Christianity have often been led to certain walks of argument and investigation, on which they might not have otherwise entered, by some hostile assault or other of the enemies of the faith. When a combatant has pointed the finger of scorn to some alleged weakness, some vulnerable quarter, whether in the outworks or in the substance itself of Christianity—it has often ended with the counter-demonstration of a strength in that very quarter, of which neither the Church nor the public had any conception before. The objection of adversaries first drew to it the attention of friends; and they have achieved a great deal more than simply displaced the objection—they have built up a strong affirmative evidence in its room. They have not been content with the overthrow of that hostile argument which first led them to the ground, and there set them on some specific walk of reasoning or of inquiry. They have generally chosen to prosecute that walk further; and the fruit has been, not a defence merely against the particular infidelity which had provoked them to the combat, but a great positive conquest over it. The alleged disproof has been turned into a weapon against the adversary; and where we at one time in the battles of the faith were told to look at a breach, an opening or place of exposure—there we now behold the firmest of its bulwarks. Such, for example, we flatter ourselves to be the effect of Hume's peculiar scepticism on the subject of testimony, when the right treatment is bestowed on it. A great positive gain redounds to the Christian argument, if it have been proved, not only that there is enough of that best and highest testimony which neutralizes the improbability of a miracle—but as much more of it as creates a vast overplus of evidence in favour of the gospel miracles, and brings them down to posterity as far the best-authenticated facts which have been transmitted to us in the history of ancient times. The same has been the upshot of the controversy, first provoked by infidels, on the alleged discrepancies between one part of Scripture and another. The defenders of the faith have not only adjusted these; but they have made a more strenuous inquisition than was necessary for this service alone; and the result is that, be-



neath the surface of general observation, they have discovered such a number of before unobserved harmonies—such minute, and till then unnoticed coincidences, that no impostor could ever have devised, or if he had, then, to serve his own purpose, he would have placed them more openly in the view of all men—such an artless and obviously undesigned correspondence, in many hundreds of particulars, that had escaped the discernment of all ordinary readers, and that has only been evolved into manifestation by a process of thorough sifting, on the part of those who have been at the pains laboriously to track, and to cross-examine, and to confront the various parts and passages of the record with each other—as nothing possibly can account for, but that the whole narrative or composition has a groundwork of truth for its subject-matter. In the present chapter we shall verify this remark by one or two instances, taken from that marvellous work, the *Horæ Paulinæ* of Dr. Paley. But again, exceptions have been made to Scripture on the ground of its discrepancies, not with itself alone, but with the informations of other and contemporary writers. These have led to a distinct walk of inquiry from the former; and the defenders of revelation have in general reconciled the alleged contradictions. But they have not stopped there. They have discovered, we mean Lardner and his followers, such a profusion of coincidences, and these too of so incidental a character, between the Bible and other writings—such an impregnation of historical truth, or what may be termed the truth of the times, as never could have been amalgamated by the skill of any fabricator, with a work either of fictitious design or that was the production of a later age. In like manner, the alleged immoralities of Scripture have led to the triumphant exhibition of the moral, which some would place on a level with the miraculous argument for the truth of Christianity. But in no walk of evidence, we think, has the observation we now make been more remarkably verified, than in that which is termed the experimental. The subject-matter of Christianity has been represented as incongruous with the state of human nature, and as therefore inapplicable to the rectification or the improvement of it. On the contrary, no argument has proved more effective on the side of the gospel of Jesus Christ—none has been so mightily instrumental in gaining disciples to the faith—as the deep insight of this religion into the before unrevealed mysteries of the human spirit, and the adaptation of its doctrines to the felt condition and necessities of the species.

5. In all these instances, there is a distinct transition from the negative to the positive. We first repel the alleged disproof; and then, by a continuous and sustained prosecution of the subject, we may succeed in raising a highly affirmative proof upon its overthrow. We might not only, for example, clear away from revelation the burden of all its alleged immoralities; but we may evince the perfection and refinement of the moral system of the Gospel to be such—that, when contrasted with the licentious and revengeful system of paganism on the one hand, or with illiberal Judaism on the other, it may manifest itself not to have originated with the fishermen of Galilee, but to have descended upon them by inspiration from heaven. Or again, not only may the imputed contradictions all be reconciled; but such recondite harmonies may be evolved; such obviously undesigned coincidences, as were beyond the reach or the policy of any impostor, may be fetched from beneath the surface of common and cursory observation; such minute and before unobserved symphonies between parts lying remote from each other may be brought out to view, as never could have been realized without a common substratum of truth to rest upon—that, out of these materials, a most impressive argument, and altogether of a positive character, on the side of the Christian religion, may be constructed—as has been done in most masterly and felicitous style by Dr. Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ*. Or again, not only may we manifest, that there is nought of discrepancy between the Bible, and either the history and state of the world, or the state of human nature; but that throughout the narrative and doctrine of the Sacred Volume, there is a most marvellous accordancy with both; and on these may be grounded, not merely the affirmative proof of that sustained connexion which obtains between Scripture and secular history, but that experimental proof which, in one branch of it, we hold to be the most effective of all for gaining proselytes to the faith. We mean the proof that is afforded by the felt agreement between the statements of the Bible and the state of the inquirer's own breast—by the manifold adaptations of Christianity to the moral nature of man—by the adjustment which obtains, like that of a mould to its counterpart die, between the offered remedy of the gospel and the diseases of humanity, as, for example, between the propitiation that is set forth to us from heaven and the guilt which trembles upon earth. In all this, there is not merely a power to constrain the attention but to convince and satisfy the judgment; there is



a light struck out between the Bible on the one hand, and the conscience on the other, which radiates, not a fanatic gleam, but a clear and rational evidence on the soul—and which, however disowned or perhaps derided in the schools of literature, is a powerful instrument of discovery notwithstanding, and would be enough of itself to guide the path, whether of the peasant or of the philosopher, to heaven.

6. At present we begin with an evidence which is strictly and wholly internal, founded on the agreements between Scripture and Scripture—such agreements as no impostor would have devised, and which therefore can only be accounted for by the general truth and authenticity of the whole. The initial step, in the track of this investigation, is to deliver the Bible from the charge of its seeming contradictions—for even at first sight, and on the most slight and superficial view, appearances of this sort do stand palpably forth on the face of the record—such, therefore, as a superficial infidelity would be the most ready to seize upon. Now every semblance of this nature, if satisfactorily done away or disposed of on a nearer and stricter examination, forms a distinct argument in favour of the revelation—proving, as it does, such an absence of care and contrivance as could only proceed from the consciousness of truth on the part of the narrator—else he would not have exposed himself to a discredit, which every author, who tries to palm a fabrication upon the world, would labour most studiously to avoid. When the alleged discrepancy obtains between different writers in Scripture, as the Evangelists of the New Testament—the legitimate inference on the adjustment of such discrepancy is, that there could be no collusion between them; and that their testimonies therefore are independent of each other. This whole subject has been investigated with much detail, and been most ably and elaborately argued by the defenders of Christianity.\* It will be found that, with very few exceptions, these apparent contradictions all admit of an actual solution; and the remaining ones, of a solution which may be termed hypothetical—that is, a solution which would perfectly account for the seeming discrepancy, on certain given suppositions not unlikely in themselves, though not expressly warranted by any informations that we actually possess. Even here the principle which we have elsewhere laboured to

\* We have a pretty full list of these contradictions in Horne's "Introduction to the Holy Scriptures." Ed. 7th, vol. ii. Part II. Book II. ch. vii. sect. vi.—with an account of the manner in which they are reconciled.



demonstrate will be found of avail—we mean the use of a hypothesis in controversial argument, not as being competent to the office of establishing a proof, but altogether competent to the office of repelling an objection. If the supposition in question remove the discrepancy, and if, *for aught we know*, the supposition may be true or is not incredible—then, although not of strength enough to warrant its own absolute certainty, it may at least be of strength enough to keep an objection at abeyance, so that it shall not be suffered, when thus capable of being disposed of, to upset a religion having such weight and variety of positive evidence in its favour. It reconciles us all the more to this conclusion on the subject of these remaining difficulties, that the labours of criticism are constantly diminishing the number of them—the affirmation of Michaelis respecting the alleged misquotations of the Old Testament in the New, which form one species of apparent inconsistency, holding true of them all. “Having found,” he says, “by actual experience and a more minute investigation of the subject, that many passages, which other critics as well as myself had taken for false quotations, were yet properly cited by the apostles, I trust that future critics will be able to solve the doubts in the few examples that remain.”\* It is thus that the hypothetical solutions are at length converted into actual ones; and on the strength of both, such a vindication has been effected, as not merely to neutralize the objection, but to substantiate a strong affirmative proof in favour of the artless honesty of writers, who evidently practised no elaboration for the purpose of sustaining a verisimilitude in the absence of verity, or giving an aspect of consistency to imposture.

7. But the argument thus obtained from the adjustment of these seeming contradictions and differences, is distinct from the argument on which we are now to insist, and which is obtained from the discovery that has been made, in this same line of investigation, of a mighty host of coincidences before unnoticed and unknown. For many centuries the Christian world had not been aware of their existence; because, placed as it were in latent depths beneath the reach of cursory or superficial observation, whence they have at length been extracted and exposed to view by the diligence of critics and collators. We have already referred to the happiest specimen of this in the *Horæ Paulinæ* of Dr. Paley, who not only, as if by the use of a prob-

\* Michaelis's “Introduction” by Marsh. Ed 4th, vol. i. p. 210.

ing instrument in most skilful hands, has found his way to these hidden treasures ; but gathered and arranged them into a cabinet of truly precious things, for the entertainment and solid instruction of his readers. There are only two hypotheses which can account for the perfect correspondence that he exhibits, between remote informations, and often fragments of information, which he has brought together from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul—and so as to make out of them, in each instance, one entire and consistent fact or passage in the history of the Apostle. Either it must have been a true history, or else a most artful and laborious fabrication. It must have had a real groundwork in a series of actual occurrences ; or it must have been the sustained and skilful invention of one, who so pieced and adjusted one part to another, as to present us with that immense and ever-increasing number of circumstantial agreements, which are now set forth in open manifestation to the general eye. Their exceeding minuteness and variety altogether refute the imagination that they could have happened at random ; and thus shuts us up to one or other of the two hypotheses—an authentic story ; or a most intricate and refined imposture—the chief plausibilities of which, however, were to lie in reserve for nearly two thousand years, till, by a process of development almost as laborious as the original invention of them, they should at length become patent to general observation, and then work their full and favourable effect on the minds of a distant posterity. Such a species of practising is wholly unexampled in the history of this world's delusions. We might as soon expect that the pretender to an estate would, with his own hands, tear the likeliest of its forged title-deeds into fragments, and then bury them in scattered portions under ground—where, in the course of generations, they might be reassembled by some future antiquaries into a demonstration, that his were the valid rights of the property, that these were the undoubted evidences of himself being the legitimate proprietor. No impostor would first devise a number, an exceeding number of specious likelihoods in his favour ; and then deposit them in places so inaccessible, as that not one in ten thousand could be in the least aware of them. This is not the way of an impostor, who is ever sure to set himself off to the greatest and most immediate advantage, and who for this purpose would make all his proofs and pretensions stand forth as discernibly as possible before the eye of public observation. There remains no other conclusion, then, respecting these

inferred and altogether undesigned congruities, than that they are the vestiges and proofs of a real history, and of which the world was not conscious till thoroughly explored by the shrewd and fortunate adventurer who had opened his way to them, as to a rich mine of evidence, and thence gathered the materials of an overpowering argument for the truth of our religion. But, instead of attempting the general description of this mode of inference, it is better that we should present the reader with at least one or two of its specimens—selected, not altogether because they are the most striking in the collection, but because they are among the shortest.

8. “Colossians iv. 9. ‘With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, *who is one of you.*’

“Observe how it may be made out that Onesimus was a Colossian. Turn to the Epistle to Philemon, and you will find that Onesimus was the servant or slave of Philemon. The question will therefore be, to what city Philemon belonged. In the Epistle addressed to him this is not declared. It appears only that he was of the same place, whatever that place was, with an eminent Christian named Archippus. ‘Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved and fellow-labourer; and to our beloved Apphia, and *Archippus* our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house.’ Now turn back to the Epistle to the Colossians, and you will find Archippus saluted by name amongst the Christians of that church. ‘Say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it,’ (iv. 17.) The necessary result is, that Onesimus also was of the same city, agreeably to what is said of him, ‘he is one of you.’ And this result is the effect either of truth, which produces consistency without the writer’s thought or care, or of a contexture of forgeries confirming and falling in with one another by a species of fortuity of which I know no example. The supposition of design, I think, is excluded, not only because the purpose to which the design must have been directed, viz., the verification of the passage in our Epistle in which it is said concerning Onesimus, ‘he is one of you,’ is a purpose which would be lost upon ninety-nine readers out of a hundred; but because the means made use of are too circuitous to have been the subject of affectation and contrivance. Would a forger, who had this purpose in view, have left his readers to hunt it out, by going forward and backward from one epistle to another in order to connect Onesimus



with Philemon, Philemon with Archippus, and Archippus with Colosse? all which he must do before he arrives at his discovery, that it was truly said of Onesimus, 'he is one of you.'

"2 Timothy iii. 15. 'And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.'

"This verse discloses a circumstance which agrees exactly with what is intimated in Acts xvi. 1, where it is recorded of Timothy's mother 'that she was a Jewess.' This description is virtually, though I am satisfied, undesignedly, recognised in the Epistle, when Timothy is reminded in it 'that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures.' The Holy Scriptures undoubtedly meant the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The expression bears that sense in every place in which it occurs. Those of the New had not yet acquired the name, not to mention that in Timothy's childhood, probably, none of them existed. In what manner, then, could Timothy have known 'from a child' the Jewish Scriptures had he not been born on one side or both of Jewish parentage? Perhaps he was not less likely to be carefully instructed in them, for that his mother alone professed that religion."

9. These are but two specimens out of many alike impressive, and they are yet far from being exhausted. They will be still further multiplied by the labours of future inquirers, and so as to form an accumulating evidence, and of a kind too strictly and wholly internal—educated as it is altogether from the comparison of Scripture with Scripture. Were the agreements thus manifested obvious and explicit, refuge might be taken in the imputation of forgery; but, when they can only be obtained by a very circuitous track of investigation, all suspicion of contrivance is effectually done away. It is this which constitutes the main strength of that circumstantial evidence which lies in the depositions of living witnesses, who exhibit a sustained coincidence without collusion, and that too in evidence of the utmost particularity. It is consent without concert, in things of such exceeding minuteness and variety, that stamps a credit upon testimony, even when the character and condition of the witnesses are altogether unknown—nor is it necessary, for the purpose of feeling its strength, that more should be attended to than the testimony itself. The two species of agreement are quite distinguishable—that which is the fruit of artifice, and that which is altogether unsought and spontaneous; and it is the exceeding multitude of

these last which makes the history of Paul, as educed from the Acts of the Apostles and from his own Epistles, so pregnant with an evidence of the highest order. For these documents admit of being confronted and cross-examined in the same way that living witnesses are, who, if found to agree in every point even the most incidental and the most exempt from every appearance of design—then no other conviction can possibly result from their *common* testimony, than that it is the evidence of a common truth to which all the parties had access, and on which the statements of them all are founded. The closeness and exactness of these now evolved harmonies are all the more impressive that they were before unnoticed, and which go therefore irresistibly to prove that they were also undevised—for they would not have answered the purposes of forgery. The evidence afforded by these unexpected junctions of so many little fragments which lie far apart from each other, has been aptly compared by Dr. Paley himself to the evidence given by the parts of a cloven tally, as being indeed the real parts of a real and authentic whole. No such contexture could have come forth of the hands of fiction or imposture—which never would have busied itself in framing a tissue, not of palpable but of unseen consistencies, that never could have been known, had it not been for the labours of a dexterous analyst who succeeded, but with great pains, to open up and unravel them. The thread, to use Dr. Paley's own image, which touches upon so many points, would have been set forth more fully and plainly by the original fabricator, if the whole be indeed a fabrication, and not left to be disentangled from the mass in which it lies enveloped—proving incontrovertibly, that it is a substratum or a groundwork of truth from which it has been taken. The reciprocal illustration cast by texts or clauses of texts far asunder from each other, as being obviously not the result of studied adaptation, can only be the result of that living reality which pervades and animates the whole. The immense number of such correspondences, as if by an author altogether unconscious or certainly without the least endeavour to display them, yields an evidence of the strongest sort—an evidence, too, independent of history, and not drawn from any external source, from any outward credentials; but from the very contents and substance of the record itself.

10. And it is an evidence not confined to that special department of Scripture, whence it has been gathered in such teeming and marvellous profusion by the hand of Dr. Paley. We be-



lieve that it is an evidence more or less to be found in every true narrative of any considerable length, which has descended to us from ancient times. We must therefore expect to meet with it in other parts of Scripture; and, accordingly, this successful attempt of Paley has been followed up by successful imitations on the part of other labourers. The direct narrative of the transactions in the Pentateuch, and the proper record of which is to be found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, is again presented to us in an altered and abridged form in the book of Deuteronomy. The comparison of the history with its recapitulation has been ably prosecuted by Dr. Graves; and much pleasing evidence of this kind has been deduced by him.\* The same has been well accomplished by Mr. Blunt in another portion of Scripture—the four gospels which he confronts both with each other and with the Acts of the Apostles.† We offer from the latter performance a few brief specimens of that coincidence without design on which the whole of this particular argument is founded.—Compare Matt. viii. 14 with 1 Cor. ix. 5, where from each passage, and obviously not copied the one from the other, we gather that Peter was a married man.—Read the four following passages, Mark vi. 3, Luke viii. 19, John ii. 12, and Matt. xii. 46; and it will be found that the death of Joseph is indirectly shewn, by all the four Evangelists, to have happened when Christ was alive; and we add, that from Luke ii. 42, 43, it appears to have happened after He was twelve years of age. In keeping with this no mention is made of Joseph at the feast of Cana, or at the resurrection.—There are certain minute and delicate traits, and certainly not the less effective on that account, of the authorship of the Gospels by Matthew and John, and which harmonize with the received understanding, that themselves were the writers of them. The following are two examples taken from the former of these Evangelists. In Matt. ix. 10, Jesus is represented as sitting down to meat with publicans and sinners in *the* house. When the same transaction is recorded in Mark ii. 15, it is called *his* house, the house of Matthew. In Luke v. 29, it is called *his own* house. It was natural in the proprietor to call it *the*, rather than his or his own house. It forms another internal mark of truth that so many publicans

\* See Graves' "Lectures on the four last books of the Pentateuch," designed to show the divine origin of the Jewish religion, chiefly from Internal Evidence.

† See Blunt's "Veracity of the Gospels and Acts, from their coincidences with each other and with Josephus."



should have been of the party. Again, in Matt. x. 2, &c., the apostles are enumerated in pairs, probably from their being sent in their respective missions by two and two. Matthew is associated with Thomas; and when the enumeration is made by Matthew, Thomas is named first. In Mark iii. 18, and Luke vi. 15, Matthew is named the first. The discreditable circumstance of his having been a publican is kept out of sight by the two latter Evangelists, but noticed with characteristic modesty by Matthew himself.—In Matt. xiv. 1, 2, we find Herod speaking to his *servants*, of Jesus, which was very likely to happen, if he knew them to have been interested in Jesus and aware of Him. This is corroborated both in Luke viii. 3, where mention is made of Joanna the wife of Herod's steward, and Acts xiii. 1, where we read of Manaen brought up with Herod.—In Matt. xxvi. 67, 68, they who struck Jesus with the palms of their hands are made to say, "Prophecy (or divine) unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?"—a challenge to the supernatural pretensions of him who professed to be the Messiah, that is not very intelligible, from the omission of a circumstance supplied by another Evangelist. In Luke xxii. 64, we are told that He was *blindfolded*.—In Matt. xxvi. 65, the charge on which the Jews condemned Christ was *blasphemy*—a crime of all others the best fitted to make Him the object of popular indignation. Whereas in Luke xxiii. 2, when instead of being accused before the Jews, He was taken to the Roman governor before whom this charge would not have been so effective, He was represented as "perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a king." All this is in harmony, but surely an unstudied harmony, with John x. 33, John v. 18, and Acts xxiii. 29.—Lastly, in John vi. 5, we find Jesus singling out Philip in the question He put, as to the means that could be provided at the place where they then were, for the entertainment of a multitude overtaken with hunger. In Luke ix. 10, we read that it was a desert place, belonging to a city called Bethsaida. And lastly, in John i. 44, we are told that Philip was of Bethsaida—the likeliest person then to whom this question should have been addressed. These are but a few examples out of the many. In Mr. Blunt's work, which is a superior performance, the reader will meet with a goodly number of others to the full as striking and satisfactory as those which we have now given.

11. Scripture throughout is replete with this internal evi-

dence ; but, without instancing any other or separate portions of it, let us advert for one moment to that great and general coincidence—that unity of purpose and counsel, by which from first to last the whole of it is pervaded. In the whole history of the world, there is nothing that bears the least resemblance to it—an authorship beginning with Moses and terminating with the apostle John, that is, sustained by a series of writers for 1500 years, many of them isolated from all the rest, and the greater part of whom were unknowing and unknown to each other, insomuch that there could be no converse and no possible concert between them. A conspiracy between parties or individuals so situated had been altogether superhuman. Their lots were cast in different generations ; and nothing can explain the consistency or continuity of their movements towards one and the same great object, but that they were instruments in the hands of the one God, who, from generation to generation, keeps unchangeably by the counsels of His unerring wisdom, and the determinations of His unerring will. The convergency towards one and the same fulfilment of so many different lights, appearing in different ages of the world, and placed at such a distance from each other, admits, we think, of but one interpretation—nor, without the power and the prescience of an overruling God, can we account for that goodly, that regular progression of consentaneous and consecutive authorship, which is carried forward by the legislators, and seers, and historians of the children of Israel. And this evidence is not confined to the articulate testimony of their writings. The ritual, the institutions, the events, of which their priestly and consecrated land was the theatre, all tell us of the same thing ; and announce that divine harmony which connects the dim prefigurations of the elder with the brighter developments of the latter dispensation. There is a minute and microscopic cognizance which might be taken of the harmonies of Scripture, and which comes intimately home to the conviction of the inquirer ; but there is also a consistency of greater lineaments—an unbroken continuity of design which passes onward from century to century—the congruities, not of one personal history, but of a scheme that commences with the first origin, and has its consummation in the final destinies of our species—a succession of professed revelations, of which the first and last stand apart at the distance of greatly more than a millennium, yet all actuated by one reigning spirit, and having for their object the establishment of a spiritual economy, which might reconcile

glory to God in the highest with peace on earth and good-will to men—these form the correspondences, not of a story that embraces but the transactions of one individual, but of a system which is commensurate to the world, and bespeaks in its leading characters the mind and the majesty of God.\*

12. But there is another species of adaptation, alike prolific of argument with that on which we have insisted hitherto—not the coincidence only which obtains between Scripture and Scripture, but the coincidence, alike varied and minute, and circumstantial, which obtains between Scripture and the works either of Jewish or Christian authors—or rather between Scripture and the state of things as made known by these authors in and about Judea. The title of Mr. Blunt's work, to which we have already referred, is, "The Veracity of the Gospels and Acts, from their coincidences with each other and *Josephus*." The truth is, that from the one comparison we might educe an argument of the very same character and effect, with that more strictly internal argument, which, by means of the other comparison, has been presented with such signal ability and success by Dr. Paley. In mathematics, if one line of perfect straightness but coincide with another in two points, then they are perfectly straight throughout and coincide universally. What is now affirmed of a line in mathematics does not hold to the same extent of a line in history—but certain it is, that the greater is the number of points at which any given history coincides with another that is received and trusted in as authentic, the greater is the probability of their entire coincidence both with truth and with each other—the inference from their mutual agreement being, that both copied from, and therefore that both agree with the same original realities which they are employed in describing. This probability is greatly enhanced by the situation in which we find these points of coincidence—that is, in situations the least prominent, the least noticeable, the least obtrusive, and therefore the least likely to attract the observation of readers or inquirers. We can imagine a number of coincidences to be framed by an inventor, but then it would be in places which served his immediate purpose best; nor would he ever think of devising a number of coincidences, and then placing them so beyond the reach of common access or observation, that not one in ten thousand of his readers ever could have discovered them.

\* We ask the reader to reflect how unlike, in this respect, the religion of Mahomet is to that of Jesus Christ.



They are agreements like these which form the materials of one and the same argument, whether in the process of internal or of external comparison. When the comparison is between parts of Scripture, the resulting evidence is like that afforded by the fragments of a cloven tally. When the comparison is between Scripture and other authors, the resulting evidence is altogether of the same genus—though, without supposing a disjunction of parts, it is more like that afforded by the adaptation of a key to its lock, of a die to its counterpart mould, of a seal to its impression, or of any unbroken whole to the external contour from which it has taken both its dimensions and its outline.

13. The literature connected with this part of the argument, too, was, like the other, originated by infidelity. Contradictions were alleged by Woolston and others, between Scripture and the known customs and history of Scripture times; and not only have these been satisfactorily disposed of, but the ulterior achievement in this walk of investigation has been, that a strong affirmative evidence is now raised on the basis of a deeper and more manifold coincidence, between Scripture and external history or external observation, than was before known or even imagined. Both ancient writers and modern travellers have made their respective contributions to this argument, which, though defensive at the first, has earned a great positive accession to the cause, and made it far more rich in evidence than before. In the work of reconciling the apparent contradictions, the student will not fail to observe the operation of a principle to which we have often adverted—a disposition on the part not of infidel only, but of Christian writers also, to defer greatly more to the testimony of the ex-scriptural than to that of the scriptural authors—insomuch that, on every semblance of a disagreement betwixt them, the blemish or suspicion is always associated with the latter and not with the former. Matthew and Mark and Luke and John and Paul are sisted as parties or pannels at the bar—while Josephus and Philo and Tacitus and Pliny are made the judges, at whose tribunal they must wait their sentence, whether of acquittal or condemnation. Nay, the silence of the profane has often been construed into an impeachment against the testimony of the sacred authors—whereas the converse treatment has never been attempted in the way of retaliation by the defenders of Christianity. If it had, the attempt would have been resented, and most warrantably, by every sound eruditionist or critic—for how are the informations of

history to grow upon our hands, unless each individual writer be permitted to offer some contributions of his own? There might be enough of common truth among the esteemed authors of antiquity, to authenticate their respective narrations—so that, while Tacitus obtains full credit for all that is peculiar in his history, why might not evangelists and apostles be indulged also in their peculiar statements, even when no foreign corroboration is to be found? But it is when the evangelists are not only unsupported, but to appearance contradicted by profane or Jewish writers, that this disparity in their treatment becomes most obvious. For example, Josephus tells that Cyrenius was not governor of Syria till ten or twelve years after the time at which Luke, in the first and second verses of his third chapter, seems to tell us that he was the governor of that province. It seems a settled point among the controvertists on both sides of this question that Josephus must be right, and the mistake, if any, must be Luke's.\* The defenders of Christianity scarcely every think of boldly retorting the possibility that Josephus or Tacitus or Pliny might be mistaken. The infallibility is all conceded to the ex-scriptural authors; and the great effort is to clear up the apparent misstatements or mistakes into which it is assumed, on every case of an aspect of contrariety, that the evangelical writers must have fallen. In the particular instance now referred to, this has been effectively done by the indefatigable Lardner, who conceives that Cyrenius had made an assessment at the time of our Saviour's birth, and before he was governor of Syria; but that Luke, in telling the transaction, mentions Cyrenius not as being actually governor at the time, but as one who now, or at the moment of his writing, in virtue of having received the preferment some time afterwards, had the title affixed to his name; and which is often given to individuals—even when relating those parts of their history that take place

\* "When St. Luke, then, and Josephus differ in their accounts of the same fact, the question is, which of the two writers has given the true one? And here it is not a little extraordinary, that without further inquiry it is universally determined in favour of the latter, as if Josephus were inspired, and whoever contradicted him must of course be mistaken. This is a method of proceeding which is applied on no other occasion," &c.

"This at least is certain, that if we found the same contradiction in the relation of a fact between either Greek, or Roman, or modern historians, we should not hesitate to prefer the author who was contemporary to the event related, and who to a knowledge of the person described joins minuteness and impartiality, to him who lived in a later period, and wrote a general history, of which the subject in question was only an inconsiderable part—Michaelis's *Introduction*, vol. i., part ii., chap. ii., sect. 12.



either previous or subsequent to the period of their official dignity.

14. But not only, in the progress of criticism, are these contradictions rapidly clearing away, so as to present a number that is gradually and perpetually lessening; but their force is well-nigh disarmed, in that they seem now as if lost and overborne, in the affirmative evidence of those opposite harmonies, which every new labourer in this field of inquiry is adding to the list—and such harmonies too, as nothing but truth can explain. The richest collection of these is to be met with in Lardner, who—if we read of the trials, or the travels, or the customs, or the controversies, or the local and national peculiarities, or the varieties of incident and discourse which are recorded in the New Testament—finds in every contemporaneous author who borders on the same ground, and may even have entered upon it, or in the subjects of which he treats, whether they be Chronology, or Geography, or Jurisprudence, or History, or facts and statistics of any sort—finds in every such author, and in every such subject, a test or a touchstone which he might apply to the writings of the evangelists and apostles, and by which he might determine the accuracy of their statements or allusions both to the circumstances and the events of the period which is described by them. The restless politics of that age—the perpetual changes then taking place in the government of provinces, and the territorial distribution of the lesser states, more especially of Judea—the limits and respective functions of the civil and military power in these subjugated countries, adverted to so frequently in Scripture, and open either to disproof or confirmation from the well-known practice and polity of the Romans—these, and such as these, make up altogether a most delicate and severe ordeal, by which to detect the mistakes of ignorance, or the misstatements of forgery and fiction. It is strikingly demonstrated by Lardner in the first part of his *Credibility*, how well the writers of the New Testament have stood this ordeal. We can scarcely afford to offer any of the particulars of that very minute and statistical examination into which he has gone. In his chapter on the Princes and Governors mentioned in the New Testament, the evangelical writers stand confronted chiefly with Josephus—both as to the name, and title, and history, and period of these ever-shifting functionaries, and as to the limits of their respective jurisdictions. For one example out of the very many—when Herod, who had possession of the whole country, died;



and Joseph, the reputed father of our Lord, returned from Egypt—he was afraid of Archelaus, who, in the division that took place after his father's death, was made king of Judea—and turned aside to the parts of Galilee, not now under the same government; for Herod Antipas, as Josephus tells us, was then governor of Galilee and Peræa, and Philip of Trachonitis and the neighbouring countries. Among the manifold points of agreement that are elicited by this comparison between the incidental allusions of the New Testament and the direct informations of the Jewish historian, we would instance the passage which relates to this Herod, and which respects both his wife Herodias and his daughter Salome—as also the story of another Herod mentioned in the Acts, who was grandson of Herod the Great, who killed James, and apprehended Peter, and suffered a remarkable death, and which, as respects all that is ostensible in the testimony of Luke, is fully borne out by the testimony of Josephus. Regarding this last Herod, there occurs what may truly be termed a very critical coincidence—inasmuch as Luke ascribes to him, towards the end of his government, the sovereign power in Judea; and it appears from other sources, that this power he actually did exercise, but only during the three last years of his life. We have a nicety of a still more trying description in the title of Proconsul given with propriety by the Evangelist, but a propriety dependent on the fluctuations that were constantly taking place in the arrangement and constitution of the Roman provinces. In another chapter respecting the state of the Jews and Judea during the ministry of Christ and His apostles, the history in the Gospel is brought into contact at many points with that of Josephus and others. We advert but to one of these instances—the power of life and death reserved to themselves by the Romans, while the power of the lesser punishments was suffered to remain with the Jewish authorities. It is only for the purpose of noticing the amount of surface over which this work of comparison has been extended, that we advert to the title of his next chapter, “Of the state of the Jews out of Judea”—whilst the title of the following, “Concerning the Jewish sects and Samaritans,” serves to evince how crowded the four Gospels and Acts of the Apostles are with the materials of a cross-examination between their respective authors and Josephus. The next succeeding chapter of the Jews and Samaritans' expectations, and their idea of the Messiah, brings even heathen authors into a state of juxtaposition with the

writers of the New Testament. But perhaps no passages of the evangelical history are more replete with this sort of argument, than the single chapters which retail the circumstances of our Saviour's last sufferings, where we have the names and titles and respective powers of the respective dignitaries that were concerned in this solemn transaction—the process of trial and condemnation—the infliction of mockery and scourging that took place before the execution—the bearing of the cross—the inscription of the offence upon it in three different languages, which is fully deposed to by classic authors as one of the customs of the age—the mockeries which He had to endure at the time of the crucifixion—the place of it, without the city of Jerusalem—the burial, and, lastly, the embalming of the body. Nothing can be more artless or incidental than the manner in which all these particulars are detailed by the apostles; and yet, such testimonies can be brought together both of the Jewish and classic authors, as to furnish throughout the most ample and sustained corroboration—carried forward, beyond the death and resurrection, to the accounts which the New Testament gives of the various churches that were founded by the first teachers of Christianity. Here we have a chapter of close and manifold communion between the scriptural and ex-scriptural, in the account it gives of the treatment which the apostles and other disciples of Jesus met with both from Jews and Gentiles. The chapter which follows treats of diverse opinions and practices of the Jews; and we shall finish our very general description of this vast and voluminous evidence, by the catalogue which Lardner makes of the Roman customs mentioned in the New Testament. First, the use of the question or of torture for the discovery of crimes by the Romans—then of their method of examination by scourging—then of the unlawfulness of scourging a Roman, especially if uncondemned—then of the power which Lysias, who had Paul in custody, held at Jerusalem—then of Paul's citizenship—then of the way in which this was obtained by purchase—then of the Roman justice in not receiving accusations in the absence of the person accused—then on the imprisonment of St. Paul—then on the sending of prisoners to Rome—and, lastly, on the practice of their being delivered there to the captain of the guard. Within our narrow limits, we represent most inadequately the power and the abundance of this argument; and perhaps it had been better, for the purpose of impressing it on the reader, to have made a general reference to Lardner—without attempting, what we have done but slightly,



to instance a few of the specimens. The number, the minuteness, the circumstantiality of the allusions, and the manifest undesignedness wherewith they occur in the course of the narration—all serve to satisfy the inquirer, that a history which touches the truth at so many points, could not have done so fortuitously and at random ; and these coincidences are so obviously beyond the reach, or even though within possibility could so little subserve any of the purposes of design, that no other conclusion remains for us, but that they touch the truth at so many points, only because they touch it generally or at all points ; or because truth is the direction in which the writers of the New Testament move, the groundwork along which the platform of the gospel history is laid. The coincidence with truth at so many places, in the absence of the art that could have framed, or even of the power that could have accomplished it, is the sure token of an entire coincidence.

15. One precious fruit of these investigations is, that they have demonstrated, and upon their own new and peculiar evidence alone, the antiquity of the evangelical record. None but contemporary writers could have exhibited so minute and manifold an accuracy, amid the ephemeral changes which, in these days of incessant fluctuation, were ever taking place in the civil and political arrangements of Judea. And what makes it altogether conclusive is, that in a few years after the resurrection of our Saviour, Jerusalem was destroyed and the whole fabric of the Jewish polity was swept away—so that not a fragment or a vestige of it remained. On this tremendous event we feel assured, that the local practices and peculiarities which are so statistically and truly set forth in the New Testament must have been described by eye-witnesses, or at least during the subsistence of the Hebrew commonwealth—for the memory of them could not have survived a single generation. The unavoidable inference as to the early publication of these narratives, is of immense worth to the Christian argument—proving, as it does, that they made their appearance at a period far enough back for affording every facility, whether to the confirmation or the exposure of the miracles which are recorded in them.

16. And there is one great synchronism, which, singly and of itself, fixes the age of the composition of the New Testament, and settles it down to the first age of Christianity. It is such a style as could only have proceeded from men of Hebrew origin, who wrote in Greek, but in a Greek tinged and interspersed with



the peculiarities of their own vernacular language. And accordingly, it is alike distinguishable from the language of classic authors, and from that of the Christian Fathers of the second and third centuries. To imagine that the innumerable Hebraisms and Syriasms of the New Testament were interpolated, or rather intertwined with the whole structure of the book, for the sole purpose of giving a colour or consistency to its reputed authorship in the days of the apostles, were to accredit some forger of a later age, with the most difficult if not impracticable of all imitations—and the more as the idioms in question, instead of being simply inserted in the volume are obviously incorporated or interwoven therewith. It is an infusion rather than a mixture; and what altogether precludes the theory of a fabrication, as aggravating tenfold the unlikelihood of its ever being realized, is the distinct and characteristic variety of style, which appears in each of the individual writers—another coincidence, by the way, between the internal character of the volume and its external history. There is no mistaking, for example, the signatures of one and the same hand in the Gospel of John and in the epistles which are ascribed to him. And the same remark is applicable to the obvious mannerism of Paul—in whose writings we cannot fail to recognise the same energy, and affection, and argumentative vehemence, and abrupt transitions of a mind fired by its subject, and overflowing with its fulness every new channel which every new suggestion opens up to him. The argument is all the more enhanced by the peculiarities that obtain in the writings of Luke; and by the circumstance that Paul, notwithstanding the peculiarities of his style, gives abundant evidence of that more accomplished literature and general erudition, which harmonize with the accounts that are handed down to us by ecclesiastical history of his superior education and opportunities to those of the other apostles.\*

17. And we have to remark in this department, too—in the external harmonies of Scripture with other and separate testimony, as well as in its internal harmonies with itself—a great and general coincidence between the whole history which it unfolds to us, and all that is known beside of the history of the world. And the history in the Bible is the history of the world; but under the peculiar aspect, in the language of Butler, of its being God's world.† He deduces a strong argument for

\* Michaelis's "Introduction to the New Testament," by Marsh. Fourth Edition. Part I. chap. ii. sect. x.

† *Analogy*, Part II. chap. vii.

the truth of Scripture, from the immense number of places at which it lies open to comparison with profane history ; and yet the manner in which it stands its ground, and bears to be confronted with all the informations and documents of antiquity. This argument for the general truth of Scripture grows in strength and intensity, the more intensely it is reflected on. This book professes to be an account of the world regarded as the dominion and property of God ; and, both in its commencement and its conclusion as well as its intermediate contents, there is a greatness altogether commensurate to this object—beginning, as it does, with the creation of the species, and ending with an account of the two distinct and everlasting destinies which await the two great divisions of the human family. In the conducting of this sublime narrative, there are references to beings and places external to our world, arising from the interchanges which are said to have taken place between the visible and the invisible—the occasional visits from heaven to earth, actual or alleged—the inspirations which descended upon men ; and, in the course of these allusions we have not only repeated notices of God, but of other orders of intelligence beside ourselves, and of the relations in which we stand to them. Now, in the glimpses which are thus afforded of an extended moral economy, we are unable to confront the informations of Scripture with any independent knowledge of our own. We have no direct or personal observation of angels and spirits ; and we are not in circumstances, either for obtaining a confirmation of the Bible, or of detecting in its statements any marks of imposture—by comparing what it tells of things supernal to the world, with aught that we previously or originally know of these things.

18. But the Scripture not only offers notices and allusions in regard to matters external to the world ; it offers these notices far more abundantly in regard to matters that are within the compass of the world, but external to the church—and all which matters, unlike to the former, were within the compass of human observation, and many of which have been derived by historical transmission to ourselves in the present day. The truth is, that the Bible may be said to present us with a general outline of the world's history—as consisting in the movement of nations, in the rise and fall of earth's great empires, in the most noted chronological eras ; and adventuring, as it does, both on the names of countries, and the monarchs that ruled over them,

and the manners that characterized their people—never did imposture, if imposture indeed it be, so expose herself to a thousand lights of cross-examination, or so multiply her vulnerable points, by the daring and extended sweep that she has thus taken among the affairs of men. There is something incredible in a compact or conspiracy of deceivers, the scheme and spirit of which were handed down from one to another through a whole millennium ; but that one and all of them should have sustained such a general historic consistency through the whole of that period, that no glaring contradiction has yet been detected between the multitude of incidental notices that the penmen of Scripture have made to the countries around Judea, and at a great distance from it, and the actual state of the world—that sacred and profane history should so have harmonized, as that a consistent erudition, made up of an immense variety of particulars, has actually been raised and established out of the connexion\* between them—that there should be such a sustained coincidence from the first dawns of history, and extended by means of prophetic anticipation to the present day—truly, apart from the peculiar evidence of prophecy altogether, there is much in the artless and unforced agreements which are everywhere spread over so broad a surface of comparison, as to stamp the strongest appearance of truth both on the general narrative of the Bible, and, by implication, on the miraculous narrative, that, without the slightest appearance of ingenuity or elaborate design, is so incorporated therewith.

## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE MORAL EVIDENCE FOR THE TRUTH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. THE argument of the last chapter is of frequent application in questions of general criticism ; and upon its authority alone many of the writers of past times have been admitted into credit, and many have been condemned as unworthy of it. The numerous and correct allusions to the customs and institutions, and other statistics of the age in which the pieces of the New Testament profess to have been written, give evidence of their antiquity. The artless and undesigned way in which these

\* See Shuckford, Prideaux, and Russel, on the connexions between sacred and profane history



allusions are interwoven with the whole history, impresses upon us the perfect simplicity of the authors, and the total absence of every wish or intention to palm an imposture upon the world. And there is such a thing, too, as a general air of authenticity; which, however difficult to resolve into particulars, gives a very close and powerful impression of truth to the narrative. There is nothing fanciful in this species of internal evidence. It carries in it all the certainty of experience, and experience too upon a familiar and well-known subject, the characters of honesty in the written testimony of our fellow-men. We are often called upon, in private and every-day life, to exercise our judgment upon the testimony of others; and we both feel and understand the powerful evidence which lies in the tone, the manner, the circumstantiality, the number, the agreement of the witnesses, and the consistency of all the particulars with what we already know from other sources of information. Now, it is undeniable that all those marks which give evidence and credibility to spoken testimony, may also exist to a very impressive degree in written testimony; and the argument founded upon them, so far from being fanciful or illegitimate, has the sanction of a principle which no philosopher will refuse; the experience of the human mind on a subject on which it is much exercised, and which lies completely within the range of its observation.

2. We now enter on the consideration of the moral evidence for the truth of the New Testament, as gathered, however, not from the present character of the witnesses, but from the nature of that ethical system which they delivered; or, more generally still, not from themselves but from the subject-matter of their testimony. Doubtless, we may collect from the performance itself, such marks of truth and honesty, as entitle us to conclude, that the human agents employed in the construction of this book were men of veracity and principle. But this argument has already been resorted to,\* and a very substantial argument it is. Our present attempt is to found an internal evidence for the divinity of Scripture on the morality of its doctrines, or the purity of that moral light which beams from its pages; and which, as distinguished from other systems of religion, whether from revengeful and licentious Paganism on the one hand, or from a corrupted Judaism on the other—seems to invest the New

\* In chap. iii. of Book II., where we also adverted to the argument of the last chapter, but not with such particularity or fulness as to prevent our again recurring to it.

Testament with a sort of celestial radiance, and so to be no unambiguous token of the Heaven from whence it came.

3. But a certain preliminary question requires to be adjusted, ere it is made perfectly clear, that an internal evidence can be raised on the superior and recognised excellence of the Christian morality. For if man be capable of recognising this excellence, does it not argue him to be alike capable of having conceived it at the first, and so of bringing it forth originally to the view and admiration of the world? The faculty, one might think, of discerning the worth or goodness of any system, would seem to bespeak the faculty of discovering or devising it. If the pure and perfect morality of the gospel be now the theme of universal acknowledgment, and that by minds of every order—why might not some mind of the highest order, at the era of its publication, have been able to originate the ethical system, that was afterwards to command the assent and acquiescence of the enlightened and the virtuous in all ages? The same faculties, it can naturally be imagined, by which we are enabled to appreciate the inherent truth and value of any doctrine, might have also suggested that doctrine—so that not only might men have become its obedient disciples, but a man might have been the inventor of it. In short, it is not perceived why a thing of earthly recognition might not be a thing of earthly origination also—or how, if man, in virtue of his natural powers, can justly estimate the merits of any practical code or directory of human conduct, he might not, in virtue of the same powers, have been competent to frame it. It is on this ground that Christianity might be argued, notwithstanding the lustre of its moral superiority over every other faith, to be still a thing of terrestrial growth; and that therefore the hypothesis of a Divine revelation is altogether uncalled for.

4. Now, in opposition to this, we hold that many are the truths, which never could have sprung up within the mind—but which, when brought to it from without, meet with the full consent and coalescence of the judgment—and that in virtue not of any external evidence, but of their own inherent recommendations. There is many a truth, the credibility of which does not serve to indicate it before it is announced, but which abundantly serves to recommend it afterwards. It may have no such light as shall guide the way to it; and yet as much light as that it may be seen and recognised as truth, on the moment of its being presented. The intellect might remain in a state of darkness

and dormancy, as to many a truth which it never could have found; but awakened, as if like a candle by ignition, at the moment of contact with that truth when it is told—it, in a medium of vision thus created, might be led to discern things, and on their own intrinsic evidence too, which it never could have discovered. Of this the experience of the mind itself supplies us with many familiar illustrations. In mathematics, where every doctrine has the ground of conviction within itself, how frequent are the discoveries which could only have been made by the few, and yet which the many can most completely and most intelligently appreciate! There are propositions of such a particular description, that the very statement of them furnishes the cipher for their own verification; and the mind feels itself placed on a distinct vantage-ground, when, instead of having to go forth in general quest of that which was altogether unknown, its now more limited aim is to certify that of which it has been specifically told. It is a homely, but we think an effective illustration of this—that when desirous of joining in the psalmody at church, but ignorant of the verses which have been given out, we are unable to collect from the general voice of the congregation, the articulate sounds to which they are jointly giving utterance. Yet when directed to the place, we can instantly recognise the coincidence between the notes in the music and the syllables in the lines that have been pointed out to us. It is thus also that a prophecy, respecting the fulfilment of which we are utterly in the dark beforehand, might be cleared up afterwards—the coincidence between predictions and events which we could never have discovered, or perhaps even guessed at, becoming manifest as day, on the means of comparison being brought within our reach, when both are set before us. On the same principle, too, we shall be able to explain that powerful and peculiar evidence of which we are told in Scripture, when it speaks of the manifestation of the truth unto the conscience. But our inquiry at present is, whether the moral system of the Bible might not be the object of man's most intelligent approval, although he could neither have discovered nor devised it—or whether, though now abundantly met by the acknowledgments of an enlightened human sympathy, it did not require for its first introduction into the world a superhuman revelation.

5. The apparent diversities of moral sentiment among men, have been well accounted for by those ethical writers who con-



tend that the standard of duty is one and immutable notwithstanding; and that, not objectively in itself alone, but subjectively, or so as that all men have the same moral nature, and would agree in all their moral perceptions of virtue, if brought under the same moral tuition—insomuch that, to be owned universally, it only needs to be promulgated universally, and in such circumstances as might insure the serious and sustained attention of all men.\* There are seeming exceptions to this, in the state both of individuals and nations—in the one, when conscience is perverted by the sophistry of the passions, or, if not extinguished, brought to utter stupefaction, by the headlong and reckless indulgence of them—in the other, when some urgent and generally felt interest associates whole communities in some practice or sentiment that nevertheless is at war with the common sense of humanity. It is thus that we can imagine, among the families of a smuggling village, or of a piratical state, or even of a large commercial city, in civilized and enlightened Christendom, which owes its wealth and pre-eminence to the guilty horrors of the slave-trade—we can imagine a very slender comprehension among them, of the unlawfulness of their respective vocations. And this epidemic peculiarity, extending to whole societies of men, is greatly enhanced by the sympathy of a common feeling and a common interest in the midst of them—so as to account for those aberrations from a universal morality, by which whole countries and whole ages of the world have been characterized. It is thus that in those tribes and nations which have to maintain a continued struggle for their existence, revenge and rapacity are canonized as virtues—the obligations of a general equity being lost and overborne in the obligations of a contracted patriotism. Whether we look to the cruelties of Indian warfare, or to the guilty conquests of Rome, we find, not that the obligations of an unchangeable morality have ever been formally renounced, but that they have been lost sight of and forgotten for centuries together, in the dazzling images of a nation's glory and a nation's weal. Apart from such influences as these—apart from the darkening and disturbing forces that we have now specified—we could obtain the same assent to the same lessons of piety, and truth, and justice, and universal philanthropy all the world over. But the question is, who, in the strength and prevalence of a wide-spread delusion, who is to originate these lessons? We can understand how, should these

\* See our *Natural Theology*, Book III., Chap. ii., Art. 18-23.

forces be suspended—how, when the spirit of a man, arrested and solemnized, and recalled for a season from those influences which have so long perverted and enthralled it by a voice from *without*—how it should respond to the voice; and the light of conscience, thus resuscitated and restored, should meet and be in harmony with the external light that has awakened it. But still the question recurs, who lifted that voice at the first; and whence, or in what quarter, did the light arise? Both in the islands of the South Sea, and in the North American wilderness—large portions of the territory have been reclaimed; and the men formerly of savage life, whose consciences had lain in a state of dormancy and delusion from time immemorial, are now awake to the pure morality of the gospel—not however in virtue of a light that sprung up among themselves, but of a light brought to them by missionaries from afar. Thus it is, we historically know, that the local darkness in every particular country of the world has been dissipated—by a visitation from abroad, by a movement from some region of light to this region of barbarism. This gives a sort of experimental solution to the question—whence did light break in upon the world at the first? or at the period of its universal darkness, when that pure and perfect system of morality, the introduction of which requires to be accounted for, was nowhere to be found—how, and from what quarter, must it not have been from beyond the world, that the invasion was first made? \* “When darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, the Lord,” it is said, “shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.” “When the people which sat in darkness saw great light, when on them which sat in the region and shadow of death the light shone”—did it spring up from the earth itself, or was it a supernal light which shone over them? Might it not have been a superhuman light, although it met with a reflection in human bosoms? Might it not have been a superhuman voice that first gave utterance to those lessons of highest virtue, although it called forth a response and an echo from the consciences of men?

6. It might help us to pronounce on this question all the more confidently, if we look to the state of the Jews at the time of our Saviour—to their exclusive, their inveterately national principle, and contrast it with the more generous and expansive principle

\* The first origin of civilisation in the world is a controversy charged with principle. If history, which it seems to do, countenance or confirm the assertion that it never arose spontaneously in any nation—this points strongly to the conclusion of a primary revelation.



of our own Christianity—the one being obviously a system for a nation, the other as obviously a system for the species. Who, it may be repeated, could be the first author of such an enlargement? It follows not from any distinction of ours between the ethics and the objects of revelation, that, however competent for humanity to own the lesson, it was therefore competent for humanity to have framed it—and, more especially, cumbered, as the universal mind of society then was, by the weight of those prejudices which it was called upon to renounce. The light which appears in the very midst of this darkness, could not, we apprehend, have been originated there. In the history of the apostles themselves, we recognise the slowness and the extreme difficulty of its reception, by a merely Jewish understanding—which, though at length brought to acquiesce in the system, could never have devised it. In the very nature of that system, and more especially when taken in connexion with the circumstances in which it arose, we have an internal evidence for the divinity of its origin. To teach that which is not only repugnant to the taste, but at variance with all the hereditary and long-established notions of society—to have germinated, in the heart of a dark and narrow region, a system of morality, that conflicted at the time with all which was immediately around it, but now receives the homage of every enlightened and well-exercised spirit in Christendom—such a phenomenon closely approximates to a miracle, or rather possesses all the characters of an event as extraordinary. If to do that which is beyond human strength be a miracle of power, and to prophesy that which is beyond human foresight be a miracle of knowledge—then for a carpenter of Galilee to have taught, or for fishermen of Galilee to have promulgated that which was beyond human discovery, and surely beyond all the means and likelihoods of a discovery by them, this may well be termed a miracle of science or a miracle of sentiment.

7. This conclusion is greatly strengthened, when we attend in detail to the moralities of the gospel—and, more especially, to those of its original moralities which may be regarded in the light of a protest against, not merely the universal practice, but till then the universal sense and feelings of mankind. Its prescribed love of enemies—its law of universal purity, extending to the imaginations of the heart as well as to the overt acts of the history—its moral estimation of the superiority which lies in the desires and purposes of the inner, over the deeds and ob-



servations of the outer man—its equal and diffusive benevolence, without the abjuration at the same time of those relative sympathies which bind together the members of the same family—its high standard of charity, the love of one's neighbour as one's self; and withal, the extension of this neighbourhood so as to embrace the men of other climes and other countries than our own, embracing all in fact as we have the opportunity—its respect for rank, and yet the honour in which it requires us to hold all men, so as to maintain unbroken the distinctions of civil life, while it dignifies and exalts the very humblest of the species—the equal estimation in which it holds rich and poor on the high scale of immortality, and yet the homage which it pays to nobility and office, giving to this world's authority all its prerogatives, while reserving for the objects and interests of another world all their immeasurable value—its self-denial—its profound humility and self-abasement—its renunciation of pleasure and ambition and vanity—its walk of faith rather than of sight—its just comparison of the magnitude of time with that of eternity—above all, its entire subordination to God whom it teaches us supremely to love and implicitly to obey—These are the leading characteristics of the morality of the gospel, new to the world at the time of its publication, however fitted to recommend itself to the moral nature, not extinct though under obliteration, given to men at the first and coeval with the species. And not only is this the morality which most approves itself to the calm and enlightened judgment of men, but, in act and in experience, is it found to be the best for the happiness of the world—a regimen of peace and charity and righteousness, that of itself would turn earth into heaven; and when once universal, which it is its obvious tendency at length to become, then, in the great and glorious renovation that ensues, the brightest visions of prophecy will be fully realized. The same gospel which gladdens every heart and every family that it enters, would turn the dwelling-place of every nation whom it christianizes into a gladsome land; and, when once commensurate with the globe, and of complete operation on all who live in it, it would revive and regenerate the whole earth. Other codes and other constitutions have been framed for the separate countries of the world, and they tell the wisdom of their respective but earthly legislators; but this, in its characters alike of goodness and of greatness, and withal of boundless application, obviously announces itself as the code of humanity—and bespeaks the comprehensive wisdom of Him,

who, devising for all times and for all people, is the Legislator of the species. It is not the workmanship of a few peasants in Judea. The perfection of its moral characteristics, the greatness and perpetuity of its results—both speak to us of a different fountainhead, and decisively point to us the celestial origin whence it must have sprung.

8. But beside these more general attributes which belong to the morality of the New Testament, there are certain tests of exceeding delicacy which serve to mark the discrimination of its Author—the profoundness of His wisdom, and never more than when exemplified in cases of actual occurrence. The first specimen of this which offers itself to our recollection, is the occasion when an expensive ointment was poured on the head of the Saviour, and Judas remonstrated because of that being wasted which might have been sold and its price given to the poor. If there be one characteristic of the gospel more prominent than another, it is the tenderness of its care and consideration for the poor—not in the form, however, of a headlong affection, but subject, as every other affection ought to be under a system not of moral feeling alone but of moral tuition, to the qualifications of wisdom and principle. Our Saviour vindicates the application that was made of the precious ointment; and thus lets us know that there are other impulses beside compassion for the poor, which, in their right place and on fitting occasions, should in their turn be obeyed. And an expression of reverence and respect for a Divine messenger was one of these occasions. There are certain short-sighted philanthropists who would set up the plea of humanity to the poor in opposition to every cause, and who, under the guise—perhaps the reality—of a sympathetic regard for them, would lay an arrest on other good works, not only of more urgent principle and necessity at the time, but tenfold more beneficial in point of effect. It is thus that the expenses, even the most needful expenses of Christianity have been looked to with an evil eye; and not only would the decency, still more the dignity, of its temple-services be grudged for the reason alleged by him who betrayed its author—but, on the same ground too, have we heard both the cost of religious education for our families at home, and the cost of a missionary apparatus for the people abroad, made alike the subjects of a most virulent declamation. And there are other expenses, beside those which subserve the wellbeing of the soul, that relief for the wants of the body ought not to supersede—



the expense of justice—the expense of government—the expense even of upholding in becoming state and splendour the offices of magistracy—all which, as connected with right sentiment as well as the real interests of human society, would seem to be warranted by this example of our Saviour, even in the face of that exclusive preference for the poor which some would allege in argument for doing them away. Little have they reflected on the ruinous effect, on the fatal certainty, wherewith it would extend and sorely aggravate the poverty of our land—were the whole wealth of the country turned into one undiverted and undivided stream towards the object of relieving it. And it marks, we have often thought, not only a sound discrimination on the part of our first Christian teachers, but their wisdom, the reach and comprehensiveness of their wisdom in the foresight of consequences—that, while every positive sanction is given by them to the virtue of liberality, they have not left it unassociated with the prudence and the principle by which all its exercises ought to be guarded. The refusal of the twelve apostles to continue their services in the distribution of the common fund for the poor, and that because of the better services by which they were occupied, evince, not their disinterestedness alone, but their enlightened judgment, in that they thought it a far higher walk of benevolence to instruct the poor than to relieve them. In striking and remarkable contrast with this is the conduct of Paul—who, while his brethren in the ministry refused to join in the work of distribution, because of its encroachment on the peculiar business of their apostleship, he made large encroachment thereupon, by mixing with the labours of an apostle the labours of a tent-maker, and so working with his own hands rather than that he should be burdensome. And this he did, we are told, that he might be an example to others, in being able to say that with his own hands he had ministered to his own necessities. There are some who appear to look on alms-giving as the highest exercise of charity; but here we are most impressively told, that a higher charity still is to teach the people to be independent of alms-giving. The same lesson is reiterated by Paul in his correspondence with the churches. “If any refuse to work, neither should he eat.” “If any provide not for his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.” Nothing can be more obvious than his contempt for money, or rather, his contempt for the sordid affection of covetousness—when he urges on every possessor of wealth its



best and most rightful application, whether at one time for the relief of the poor saints, or at another for the expenses of the ministry of the gospel. But there is withal so much of manly sense, and so little of weak sentimentalism—such an equal and impartial dealing with all ranks, charging the rich that they should be ready to distribute and willing to communicate, charging the poor to be industrious and contented, and if possible, independent of charity—such a care lest his infant society should suffer from the contaminations of that hypocrisy which would “make a gain of godliness”—such a preference for that system of helping the poor, which teaches them, by their own exertions and economy, and good conduct, to help themselves—in a word, along with the tenderness, the undoubted feeling which prompted his benevolence, such a power and predominance of wholesome judgment in all his ministrations of it—as bespeaks, not only the enlightened moralist, but the enlightened political economist also. In the directions given by him for the management of the pauperism of these days, there is the profoundest insight both into motives and consequences—insomuch that, from the epistles which he has left behind him, we might draw a system of rules and principles, which, though the product of so early and rude an age, might not only serve for the guidance of particular churches, but is of best possible adaptation to the general and complicated society of modern times. This adaptation is of itself an argument for the wisdom of Christianity; and it amounts to a miracle, when we connect it with the first teachers of Christianity, and think of a wisdom so singular, so original, in the mind, whether of the tent-maker of Tarsus or of the fishermen of Galilee.

9. But in these days there occurred questions of still greater perplexity, in the solution of which Paul discovers a sagacity and a soundness of principle still more marvellous. We would instance his deliverance on marriage,\* which he permits as an indulgence, but prescribes not as a duty—a sentence in which many of our household moralists, and many even of those economists who devise for the wellbeing, not of a family, but of a kingdom at large, would not altogether sympathize. We would instance also his sound decision on the question of slavery†—unlike, we do think, to the headlong, the precipitate zeal of many modern philanthropists, when he enjoins on the children of a hapless servitude, both respect for their masters, and an acquiescence in their state, but a preference withal for a state of en-

\* 1 Cor. vii. 7, 17, 28, 32-35.

† 1 Cor. vii. 21-24.

largement, which, when it may be had, he tells them to "use it rather." But on no occasion does he evince a wisdom that looks more like the wisdom of inspiration, than in his treatment of certain peculiar questions which arose from the admission of the Gentiles into the Church of Christ, and their consequent union with the Jews in one and the same society. There is nothing to be more admired in Paul than the skill, even the dexterity, wherewith he unravels the casuistry of these questions—not of broad and obvious principle, but all the more delicate and difficult of management, that they related altogether to certain minuter observances of meats, and ceremonies, and days. It is impossible to withhold our homage from the superior and enlightened way in which the apostle treats these questions of indifferency with the command of a master, whose own conscience had strength and enlargement enough for either alternative—but, at the same time, with the tenderness of a fellow-Christian which prompted the utmost respect and forbearance for the scrupulosities of other and weaker men. He had a difficult part to act between Jews and Christians, in being all things to all men—not, it is quite palpable, for any end of selfishness, but for the sake of the furtherance of the gospel. It is thus that he who fought so manfully for the exemption and privileges of his Gentile converts, would not himself eat flesh while the world standeth, if it wounded the conscientious prejudices of a brother or made him to offend. In the exercise of his apostolic wisdom, he was called upon to give sentence on many of these points of lesser observation; but he always did it so as to sustain Christianity in all its characters of greatness, to vindicate and manifest it as being a religion not of points, but of principles. And accordingly, when he recommended compliance in these matters of insignificance, he did it on a clear principle—the principle of charity. And when he contended for liberty, it was on a principle alike clear—even that of an enlightened piety which holds the obedience of the heart, as consisting of love to God and man, to be the alone indispensable obedience. If one regarded a day, enough if he regarded it unto the Lord. If another regarded not the day, enough if to the Lord he did not regard it. We have long thought that there is an identity of principle between these solutions of the apostle, and the solutions which should be given now on certain indeterminate and not very determinable questions, that exercise, and often agitate and perplex, the minds of Christians in the present day. We mean those questions which



respect the precise style and circumstantial of Sabbath observation, as well as the precise degree in which the true disciples of Christianity might externally associate with the world, or take part in its companies and amusements. It were well to irradiate all these topics with the light of great and unquestionable principle—that, instead of degrading Christianity into a system of petty exactions urged with senseless and intolerant dogmatism, it might sustain throughout the character of that wisdom which is justified “of its children.” Now Paul accomplished this service in his wise and right adjustment of the controversies of that period. He both accommodated to the Jews to the uttermost possibility, yet rescued the gospel from the littleness, the puerility, of narrow and illiberal Judaism. When men pass from one extreme to another, they betray, in general, a like unqualified vehemence in both. But when Paul, brought up in the straitest of the sect of the Pharisees, passed from this yoke of bondage to the liberty wherewith Christ had made him free, he was not transported thereby into any unbridled or unmanageable ardour of this sort. He partitioned the matter aright between the prejudices of the old and the privileges of the new economy; and the utterance of his temperate yet decided judgments, while it bespeaks the enlargement, bespeaks also the guidance and the restraints of inspiration.

10. This reasoning might be prosecuted further. Other examples might be given in detail, of high wisdom and principle, not humanly to be expected in the state and circumstances of the apostles—and which, therefore, as bordering on the miraculous, or perhaps as fully realizing this character, might well be proposed as distinct credentials for the divinity of the New Testament. But the morality of the gospel might be viewed in another light, than merely as an exhibition on the part of its messengers—approving themselves to be singularly, and perhaps, supernaturally gifted men. It might be viewed in immediate connexion with God—or held as a demonstration, at least as a likelihood, of having proceeded from Him, with whose character it is in such full and marvellous accordance. For that system of virtue which recommends itself to the consciences of men, must also recommend itself to their notions of the Godhead. The chief argument of nature, as we have already attempted to prove, for the character of the Divinity, is the character of that law which has been graven by His own hands on the tablet of our moral nature. That to which we do homage in the system



of virtue, is also that to which we do homage in God as the living exemplar of it—and on the principle that Himself must be adorned by the virtues which He has taught us to admire. It is thus that we personify the ethical system into a Being; or pass from the character of the law to the character of the Law-giver. We fully esteem and accredit God as author of the law of conscience; and should it correspond with the law of a professed revelation, more especially if it be a revelation by which the conscience itself has been greatly enlightened and enlarged, do we recognise the probability at least, if not the certainty, of its having come from God.

11. But we can imagine more than this. We can imagine a reader of the Bible to be visited with the resistless yet legitimate conviction, amounting to a strongly felt and immediate sense that God has spoken to him there—insomuch that he feels himself to be in as direct correspondence with God uttering His own words to him, as with an earthly friend, when engaged in the perusal of a letter which he knows to be the authentic production of him from whom it professes to have come. It may be difficult to convince those who have never thus been visited by any such direct or satisfying revelation, that there is no fancy or fanatical allusion in the confidence of those who profess to have been made the subjects of it. And yet they may be helped to conceive aright of it by certain illustrations. Those Jews who heard our Saviour and testified that He spake as one having authority, had at first hand an argument for His divine mission which they could not adequately survey or explain the grounds of to another. The officers of the Sanhedrim, who were sent to apprehend Jesus, yet refrained from touching Him, “because,” as they reported, “never man spake like this man,” had also an evidence, which, however powerfully and warrantably felt in their own minds, they could not, by any statement, pass entire into the minds of other men. The centurion, who was present at the crucifixion of the Saviour, and who, from what he heard and saw of the tone, and aspect, and manner of the Divine sufferer, testified that surely this was the Son of God—may have received, through the vehicle of his senses, a deep and a just persuasion, which yet by no testimony of his could be borne with full effect, and so as to give the same persuasion, to those who were distant from the scene. And in like manner, the men who were not able to resist the spirit and the wisdom wherewith Stephen spake, may have felt a great deal more than they could

tell—yet not a groundless or imaginative feeling, but a rightful impression, which it would have been well if they had acted on, that he spake with the truth and authority of an inspired man. In all these cases, we admit the possibility of such tokens having been exhibited, as might give to the parties who were present a strong and intimate persuasion, not the less solid, that it was only felt by themselves and incommunicable to others. The solitary visitant of some desert and before unexplored island, has as good reason for believing in the reality of the scenes and spectacles before him, though no other eyes ever witnessed them but his own. And so, too, in the person of a celestial messenger, there might, for aught we know, be such real though indescribable symptoms of the character wherewith he is invested—such undoubted signatures of wisdom, and authority, and truth—such a thorough aspect of sacredness—such traits of a divinity in every look and every utterance—that, though not capable of being made the subject of a public argument, or of being reported to the satisfaction of others, might nevertheless awaken a most honest and homefelt and withal sound conviction in the hearts of those who were the witnesses of such a present and personal manifestation, and who themselves saw with their eyes and heard with their ears, what they could not make other understandings than their own to conceive.

12. Now the question is, Whether those characters of truth and of power, which we now imagine to have been in the oral testimony, might not have been transplanted into the written testimony—or whether that palpable evidence embodied in the personal history, and in the words of our Saviour as He spake them upon earth, and of which the hearers took immediate cognizance, might not be fixed and substantiated in the Bible that He left behind Him, and be there taken immediate cognizance of by the readers of the Bible. Certain it is, that the *prima facie* evidence, the first aspect of that verisimilitude which lies in the obvious sacredness and honesty of Scripture, is greatly brightened and enhanced by our intent and our prolonged regards to it. The man who devotes himself in the spirit of a thorough moral earnestness to the perusal of Scripture, feels a growing homage in his heart to the sanctity, and the majesty, and the authority which beam upon him from its pages—and in more conspicuous light, and with more commanding effect, the longer that this holy exercise is persevered in. And the question recurs—Might not this growing probability grow into a complete and



irresistible certainty at the last? Might not the verisimilitude ripen and be confirmed into the full assurance of a verity? If in the course of actual experience it be found, that we do meet with daily accessions to this evidence—how are we to know that there is not as much of the evidence in reserve, as shall at length overpower the mind into a settled yet sound conviction, that verily God is in the Bible of a truth? It is no condemnation of this evidence, that, only seen by those who have thus reached their way to it, it has not yet come within the observation of others who are behind them, who have not given the same serious and sustained attention to the Bible, or not so much made it the book of their anxious and repeated perusals—nor their right understanding of the book, the subject of their devoutest prayers. It is true, the resulting evidence is of that personal and peculiar quality, which cannot be translated in all its proper force and clearness into the mind of another—yet may it be a good and a solid evidence notwithstanding—as much so as the ocular evidence for the reality of some isolated spot which I alone have been admitted to see, and which no human eyes but my own have ever once beheld. The evidence is not at all weakened by this monopoly. To myself it is every way as satisfying and strong as if thousands shared in it. At least, irrespective of them, the conviction on my own separate and independent view of the object of the question, may have been so perfect, as to require no additions. Yet, if not an addition, there is at least a pleasing harmony in the experience of men, who have been admitted to the view along with me. We might be strengthened and confirmed by our mutual assurance of a reality in things unknown to all but ourselves, and which to the generality of the world abide in deepest secrecy. And such too the sympathy, such the confirmation felt by “the peculiar people,” in their converse with each other. They are a chosen generation, and have been translated out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel—each having the witness within himself, yet all prizing the discovery, when, on talking one with another, they find the consistency and the oneness of a common manifestation.

13. No explanation of this evidence will *convince* the uninitiated. But it may assist them to conceive of it—nay, to acquiesce in its possibility, perhaps even in its probability, or still further in its truth—though a truth which they individually have not been permitted to behold. Yet we see not how they



can approximate to the true understanding of it, unless they are told of the revelation made to the mind of man by the Spirit of God—although it be a revelation to which they are yet strangers. Yet they cannot fail to have read the intimations of such a process in the Bible—of “men translated out of darkness into marvellous light”—of “things hidden from the wise and the prudent yet revealed unto babes”—of the “day dawning, and the day-star arising in the hearts of those who were making diligent search after the doctrine of their salvation”—of “eyes being opened to behold the marvellous light contained in God’s law”—and, finally, of “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shining in the hearts of men, and giving them the light of His own glory in the face of Jesus Christ.” There may be to them a felt mysticism in these various passages—yet they are the passages of a book, the argumentative evidence of which many of them have studied, and been satisfied therewith. This higher, this transcendental evidence, they may not have shared in. Yet perhaps some general notion could be given of it; and even they might be taught in part to apprehend what they have not yet appropriated.

14. It is of capital importance for those who are strangers to this evidence, and perhaps are suspicious of its fanaticism and folly—it is of capital importance for them to be told, that the Spirit, in revealing truth to the mind, reveals only the things which are contained in Scripture. He tells us, not of the things which are out of the Bible; but he tells us of the things that are in the Bible. He sheds a light on the pages of the Word. He opens the understandings of men, but it is to understand the Scriptures. He opens their eyes, but it is to behold the things contained in this book. The design of His internal revelation, is to make the things of the external revelation visible. They are the previous objective realities of Scripture in which He deals; and, though His be in one respect a new revelation, yet the great purpose of it is to cast a light over the stable and independent truths of the old revelation. When He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us, He but shows us the things of Scripture, or the things which the Scripture tells of Christ. Each man on whom He operates is made the subject of a distinct manifestation; yet He does not tell a different Christianity to each, but the same Christianity to all—for the Christianity which He has graven on the hearts of those to whom He has imparted the gift of spiritual discernment, is a precise

transcript of the Christianity previously graven on the pages of the New Testament. At this rate there might be no fancy, no fluctuation, in the Christianity of these men—for they are all made to behold the same things; and both the doctrine which they believe, and the morality which they are taught to practise, may be tried by a reference to the same standard, even the standard of the law and of the testimony. And Scripture is still the abiding test-book of their Christianity—for, whatever the pretensions of these men, if they speak not according to the things that are written in this book, there is no truth in them. And as there is nothing precarious in their doctrine, neither is there aught precarious in the evidence upon which they have received it. One can imagine a hundred-fold strength given to the faculty of distant vision, on which the features of a remote landscape, now beyond the perception of the natural eye, might start into sure and satisfying revelation; and what we should thus behold would not be an illusion, but a solid reality, and on the best of all evidence, even that of ocular demonstration. And one can also imagine a hundred-fold strength given to the faculty of minute or microscopic vision—on which the arcana of a hidden region, now beneath the perception of the natural eye would come into view, and still on the same evidence of ocular demonstration. And thus, too, we might imagine of the Spirit of God, whom it is not for us to limit as if we indeed comprehended the whole of His way—that He gives to the mind of the inquirer, to the eye of his intellect, a powerful and penetrating discernment into the matters of Scripture; and that he is made in consequence to behold a character of majesty and sacredness, and to hear a voice of authority which tells him irresistibly of God. Whether such signatures of the Godhead as these be actually in Scripture, or what the things to be discerned are which lie in reserve for our discernment there, can only be told by him who has the faculty of discernment, not by him who wants it; in like manner, as the objects of a telescopic region can only be told by him who has the enlarged vision of the telescope, not by him who possesses but the limited vision of the natural eye. Certain it is, that if such tokens of the divinity exist in the Bible, and it is by an augmentation in the visual faculties of the mind that we are enabled to behold them—there might be as much reason and philosophy in the convictions of those by whom the truth as it is in Jesus is spiritually discerned, as there is in the confidence of the astronomer, when he tells of



the satellites of Jupiter ; or of the naturalist, when he tells of the atoms and animalcules that are beneath the ken of our unaided eyesight. The reader of the Bible, when thus gifted, might have as legitimate an assurance of the new meaning he is now made to behold—as, with only his old faculties, he had of the mind or meaning of any ordinary author.\* The very process whereof he is conscious in his own mind, and by which he has been ushered into this new and impressive manifestation of the Deity, adds a peculiar evidence of its own to that of the outward manifestation itself ; and rivets still more the conviction, that the same God, who thus supernaturally teaches him to understand this Bible, is verily in the Bible of a truth.

15. It is thus that the veriest babe in natural knowledge might be made to perceive God in the Scriptures, and there be revealed to him things hidden from the wise and the prudent.† When, in virtue of this spiritual revelation, the scales are made to fall from his eyes—he might recognise, in the sentences which the Bible gives forth, the divinity of Him who utters them, directly announcing itself to be the voice of God clothed in majesty. Yet he is informed of nothing but what the Word tells him ; but to his mind, now opened and clarified, it tells what it never told before ; and he can now say with him in the Gospel, whom a miracle had cured, “ I was once blind, but now I see.” In the whole of this wondrous record, from first to last, from the patriarch and prophets of the Old to the apostles of the New Testament, he descries throughout the purity and the wisdom and the sustained loftiness of the Godhead. As in personal converse we might recognise at once both the dignity and wisdom of him to whose spoken language we are at the time giving ear—so, in the perusal of written language, the same attributes might be discernible ; and be so enhanced as to impress on the awakened reader, the sense and the rightful conviction that God Himself had broken silence. He feels it to be the language not of earth, but of heaven’s august sanctuary. The evidence of this in the Bible beams direct upon him from its own pages ; and, however difficult or perhaps incapable of analysis it may be, this hinders not its being his rational and well-grounded faith—when

\* “ We cannot conceive how reason should be prejudiced by the advancement of the rational faculties of our souls with respect unto their exercise toward their proper objects ; which is all we assign unto the work of the Holy Spirit in this matter ”—Dr. Owen, *On the Spirit*.

† Matt. xi. 25.



to him the reading of Scripture is an act of felt and immediate fellowship with God.

16. This evidence, however distinctly felt by him who is the subject of it, or who has had the experience of its manifestation, it is extremely difficult to speak of discursively or to the satisfaction of others. Dr. Owen, in his treatise on "the Divine original authority, self-evidencing light, and power of the Scriptures, with an answer to that inquiry, How we know the Scriptures to be the Word of God," has with all his efforts failed, we think, in describing to others, what we have no doubt he genuinely experienced himself—and so leaves the subject in great obscurity. Our own Halyburton, whose book on Deism in reply to Lord Herbert,\* and whose little tract, or "Essay concerning the Nature of Faith, or the grounds upon which it assents to the Scriptures," place him in a high rank among our philosophical theologians—is the most successful expounder of it whom we have yet met with. In this latter performance, the running title of which is an "Essay concerning the Reason of Faith," he controverts the opinion of the rationalists on this subject, and especially of Mr. Locke, in his book on the Human Understanding. The following are a few extracts:—"This impress, those characters, prints and vestiges of the infinite perfections of the Deity, that unavoidably must be allowed to be stamp'd on, and shine, not merely or only or principally in the matter, but in that as spoken or written, and in the writings or words, in their style, the spirit running through them, the scope, tendency, &c. This Θεοπρέπεια or God-becoming impress of majesty, sovereignty, omniscience, independence, holiness, justice, goodness, wisdom, and power, is not only a sufficient and real, but in very deed, the greatest objective light and evidence imaginable. And where one has an understanding given to know Him that is true, and is made thereby to entertain any suitable notion of the Deity, upon intuition of this objective evidence, without waiting to reason on the matter, his assent will be carried, and unavoidably determined to rest on it as the highest ground of assurance. And this assent founded on this impress of the Deity in His own Word, is indeed an assent of the highest degree. And thus far

\* "Natural Religion insufficient, and Revealed necessary to man's happiness in his present state; or, A rational inquiry into the principles of the Modern Deists," &c. ; by the Rev. Thomas Halyburton, Professor of Divinity in the University of St. Andrews. He flourished at the beginning of the last century ; and is author of a most valuable practical work—"The Great Concern."

faith resembles our intuitive knowledge, with this difference, not as to the manner of the mind's acting, but as to the ability whence it acts; that in our intuitive knowledge, as Mr. Locke, and those of his opinion, restricts it, the evidence or objective light is such as not only is immediately without reasoning discern'd, but such as lies open to, and is discernible by our understandings, without any subjective light, any work of the Spirit of God, either repairing disabled faculties, or elevating and guiding them to the due observation, or fixing their attention, or freeing their minds of the power and present influence of aversion of will, disorder of affections and prejudices that obstruct the discerning power. Whereas this is really necessary in this case, and though the objective evidence is great, and still the same; yet according to the greater or lesser degree of this assistance, our assent must be stronger or weaker, more fixed or wavering.

“When this objective evidence is actually observant to, and under the view of the mind thus enabled, disposed, and assisted, there doth arise from it, and there is made by it, an impression on the whole soul corresponding thereto. The beaming of God's sovereign authority awes conscience. The piercing evidence of His omniscience increases that regard, the view of goodness, mercy, love, and grace operates on the will, and leaves a relish on the affections, and this truly resembles sensible evidence, tho' it is of spiritual things, and of a spiritual nature; nor is it, as it is evidence, inferiour to, but upon many accounts preferable to that which results from the impression made by sensible objects. And this, as was observ'd of the former, is also greater or less, according and in proportion unto the view we have of that objective light above mentioned. This self-evidencing power is a resultancy from, and in degree keeps pace with that self-evidencing light.

“This light whereby the written Word evidences itself unto the minds of those who have spiritual ears to hear and apply them, is nothing else, save the impress of the majesty, truth, omniscience, wisdom, holiness, justice, grace, mercy, and authority of God, stamped upon the Scriptures by the Holy Ghost, and beaming or shining into the minds, of such persons upon their hearing or perusal, and affecting them with a sense of these perfections, both in what is spoken, and in the majestick and God-becoming way of speaking: they speak as never man spake; the matter spoken, and the manner of speaking, has a



greatness discernible by a spiritual understanding, that satisfies it fully, that God is the speaker. And all the impressions of God's wisdom, faithfulness, omniscience, and majesty that are stamped upon the matter contain'd in the Scriptures being convey'd only by the Word, do join the impressions that are upon the Word, and strengthen the evidence they give of their Divine original, since these impressions do not otherwise appear to our minds, or affect them, than by the Word. The Word—by a God-becoming manifestation of the truth, that scorns all these little and mean arts of insinuation, by fair and enticing words; and artificially dress'd-up argumentations, with other the like confessions of human weakness, that are in all humane writings—commends itself to the conscience, dives into the souls of men, into all the secret recesses of their hearts, guides, teaches, directs, determines, and judges in them, and upon them, in the name, majesty, and authority of God. And when it enters thus into the soul, it fills it with the light of the glory of the beamings of those perfections upon it; whereby it is made to cry out, 'The voice of God, and not of man.'"

17. But we can imagine certain minds to be unsettled, if not repelled, by the whole of this contemplation. Many may feel that, instead of bringing the subject nearer, it has in truth distanced them from Christianity. They could apprehend the rational evidence for the truth of the gospel; and perhaps rejoiced as they were trying the strength of it, in the solidity of that ground upon which they were standing. But they have no taste and no understanding for this spiritual evidence—nor can they at all sympathize with those men of another conformation who seem regaled in the study of it, as if by a splendour and a richness to them incomprehensible. To them it appears like the substitution of an imaginary for a real basis—the quitting of a firm vantage-ground, with no other compensation for the loss of it, than a certain visionary and viewless mysticism in its place. They refuse, therefore, to enter on this impracticable region; or to entertain at all that shadowy argument which, to the eye of their intellect, has exceedingly bedimmed the question, and put it on an elevation, which, be it sound or be it fanciful, they regard as being hopelessly and inaccessibly above them. And so they incline to keep by the position which they at present occupy, and to attempt nothing higher—leaving this adventurous flight to others, but satisfied themselves with the more palpable reasonings of Leslie, and Littleton, and Butler, and Lardner, and Paley.



18. Our first reply to this is, that they do not set aside the rational, when they enter on the consideration of the spiritual evidence, or when they attempt in their own persons to realize it. They need not forego a single advantage which they have gained. The spiritual evidence does not darken or cast an uncertainty over the rational evidence—no more unsettles, for example, the historical argument for the truth of the Christian religion, than it unsettles any of the demonstrations of geometry. If by this new opening they do not feel themselves led forward, and so as to make a nearer approximation to the truth than before—they most assuredly are not thrown back by it. The argument from prophecy does not obscure the argument from miracles; and as little does the moral or spiritual evidence which we are now attempting to unfold, obscure either the one or the other of these arguments. The validity of one species of reasoning does not depend on the validity of another species which is altogether distinct from it. The more transcendental light of which we have just spoken, leaves all the other and lesser lights precisely where it found them. They discharge the same function as heretofore. The pleadings of the very authors on the deistical controversy, whom we have quoted, remain as good as ever; and if we are not admitted by them into the glories of the inner temple, they one and all of them have at least strengthened the bulwarks of the faith.

19. But moreover. What ought to abate the formidableness of this evidence (regarded by them as if it were a secret of freemasonry and only for the initiated), and make it less repulsive in their eyes, is, that, however lofty and remote from every present view and vision of theirs, there is a series of patent and practicable steps by which they and all others might be led to the perception of it. There is one most obvious principle, clear of all mysticism, and which they will not refuse—that if once convinced on rational, or on any evidence, of the Bible being indeed a message from the God of heaven, it is their urgent, their imperative duty to read that Bible; or, after having studied and been satisfied with the credentials of the book, now to explore with all docility and labour the contents of the book. There is another principle of an equally elementary character which they cannot refuse to admit, and should not refuse to act upon—that, however strange and transcendental the light of spiritual Christianity may appear in their eyes, they have at least a light of conscience within them which they are bound to follow, so as to

accompany their devout and diligent reading of the Scriptures with the most faithful observation of all which this inward monitor tells them to be right, and as scrupulous an avoidance of all which it tells them to be wrong. Thus far they walk on a plain path; and there is but one suggestion more, which, if theirs be indeed an honest respect for the authority of Scripture (as sufficiently vindicated to their apprehension on the ground of its argumentative and literary evidence alone) they will not shrink from—and that is, the obligation as well as the efficacy of prayer, and of prayer for other and higher manifestations of the truth than they have yet been permitted to enjoy. They surely do not imagine such to be the fulness and perfection of their knowledge, that there is no room in their minds for any further enlargement or further illumination. Let us then suppose them to have actually entered on this process—a most careful perusal of His Word—a most careful and conscientious doing of His will as far as is known to them—and withal, most earnest prayer for the visitation of that light which they have not yet reached, but now most honestly aspire after. We think that the truth of Scripture may be perilled on the result of such an enterprise; and that, because its own declarations will either be verified or disproved by it. For here are men willing to do the will of God; let us see whether they will not be made to know of Christ's doctrine that it is of God.\* Here are men keeping the sayings of the Saviour; let us see whether He will not manifest Himself to them in such a way as He doth not unto the world.† Here are men making a conscientious use of the light they have: and let us see whether in their history there will not be the fulfilment of the saying, that to him who hath more shall be given.‡ Here are men giving earnest heed to the Word; let us see whether the promise will not be accomplished, that the day shall dawn and the day-star arise in their hearts.§ Here are men seeking intently, and with all earnestness seeking; let us see whether or not the declaration of the Saviour will come to pass, He that seeketh findeth.|| Here are men, while in the busy and anxious pursuit of that truth which is unto salvation, conforming their walk, as far as in them lies, to all the lessons of piety and righteousness; let us see whether the glorious assurance will not be realized, that To him who ordereth his conversation aright I will show my salvation.¶ Such seems then to be

\* John vii. 17.

† John xiv. 21

‡ Matt. xxv. 29.

§ 2 Pet. i. 19.

¶ Matt. vii. 8.

¶ Psalm l. 23.

the economy of the gospel. It has an incipient day of small things,\* which, if not despised but prosecuted aright, will terminate in a day of large and lofty manifestations. It takes its outset from the plainest biddings of conscience. It has its consummation in the things of the Spirit of God, which the natural man cannot receive, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. It begins with that which all may apprehend, and all may act upon. It ends with that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the hearts of man to conceive; but which God reveals by His Spirit, even by the Holy Ghost given to those who obey him.† He is quenched, He is grieved, He is resisted by our despite of Him and of His suggestions—or, which is every way tantamount to this, the despite and disobedience done by us to the suggestions of our own conscience. Were we faithful to the lesser light, the larger would at length shine upon us. Did we hunger and thirst after these higher revelations of the gospel, then their glory and their fulness would at length be ours. This is the constitution of things. There is a connexion established between disobedience and spiritual desertion—"He who hateth his brother is in darkness."‡ And there is a connexion between obedience and spiritual discernment—"The path of the upright is like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."§ The every-day virtues of the gospel form the steps of that ladder by which we ascend to the mystic glory of its full and finished revelations. The moral is the conductor to the spiritual. Conscientiousness in practice leads to clearness in theology. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."|| "He meeteth him that worketh righteousness."¶ "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee: the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward."\*\*\* "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the

\* Zech. iv. 10

† 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

‡ 1 John ii. 11.

§ Prov. iv. 18.

|| Psalm xxv. 14.

¶ Isa. lxiv. 5.

\*\*\* Isa. lviii. 6-8.



afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day."\*

20. Now this should reconcile men to the alleged mystery of these higher communications, should soften or rather do away their offence and prejudice against it, when Christianity thus consents to be put upon its trial. However inconceivable or inaccessible the glories of its inner temple might be deemed, it is truly a plain and practicable avenue which leads to them. That is no uncertain sound which the trumpet giveth forth, when the gospel makes its first intimations, and sets those who are obedient to its call on that progressive way, which leads to the discovery of things beyond the ken of nature, and which only a light from the upper sanctuary can make manifest to the soul. It is true, that there are things revealed unto babes, and hidden from the wise and the prudent; but this is because they want the docility of babes. They have not been initiated into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, because they have not been converted and become as little children.† They do not sit to the book of revelation, as Newton did to the book of nature, with the modesty and teachableness of him who felt that he had all to learn. They have been alike unobservant of the wisdom of true philosophy, and the piety of true Christians; and so have renounced not their lofty imaginations, nor brought every thought of their hearts in captivity to the obedience of Scripture.‡ It is thus that their contempt for the higher mysteries of the gospel will be found to resolve itself into contempt for the plainest of its lessons. It tells them how to wait and work for spiritual illumination, yet they did not act—it tells them how to seek for it, yet they did not pray. They admit the authority of the book; but they refuse its sayings. It is because of its rational evidence that they admit the authority; and it is because they refuse the sayings, that they remain contemptuous and ignorant of its spiritual evidence. They are strangers to that which is recondite, because, traversing even their own principles, they have not made a faithful use of that which is obvious. Theirs will be a palpable condemnation—that the clearest dictates of their own conscience, the clearest intimations of the Word acknowledged by themselves to be divine, have been alike disregarded by them.

21. That evidence for Christianity which is seen in the light of the spirit, though called a mystical, is in truth a moral evidence. By all the Scripture testimonies which we have quoted,

\* Isa. lviii. 10.

† Matt. xviii. 3.

‡ 2 Cor. x. 5.

it is an illumination which begins and brightens onwards along the pathway of a moral obedience—advancing step by step from the lesser to the greater light, but through the conscientious use of the smaller being followed up, under the virtuous administration of the gospel, by the larger manifestation. When looked to in connexion with God, who in every individual case originates the process, it may be regarded as the fruit of His grace and sovereignty. When looked to in connexion with man, who undergoes the process, it may be regarded as the fruit of moral earnestness and prayer. Whether viewed in the history or in the results of it, it gives the impress of a thorough moral character to the economy under which we sit—that the fulfilment of duty should thus lead the way to the fuller comprehension of doctrine—or that by the desires and the labours of an honest aspiring conscientiousness, that channel is opened by which the light of heaven is let in upon the soul. The system under which knowledge is thus made to arise in the train of righteousness bespeaks the essential righteousness of its author, and is so far an evidence of its having come from the all-righteous God. But this evidence, grounded on the nature of the process which leads to the spiritual revelation, is distinct from the more latent evidence that lies in the things which are revealed—in the lineaments, now made obvious, of an authority and a sacredness and a wisdom and a truth which serve immediately to announce the Godhead to an awakened and illuminated reader of the Bible. And in the event itself of his being thus awakened, in the fact or the fulfilment that has taken place in the history of his mind, there is a third evidence, as distinct from the two former as the miraculous is from the moral evidence. The event viewed historically, or as an event, has in it indeed somewhat of the character of a miracle; but, to estimate fully its argumentative force, we must view it not merely in the light of a moral, but of an experimental evidence for the truth of Christianity.\*

22. The spiritual evidence of Christianity does not supersede the use or the importance of its rational evidence—which discharges the same function in the revealed, that the incipient light in the minds of all men does in the natural theology. If the first suggestions of conscience respecting a God lay us under the obligation of entertaining the topic and prolonging our regards to it—so the first evidence that we obtain for the Bible, as a message from God, lays us under the same obligation of pondering

\* See the next Chapter

its contents, and of making honest and faithful application of them. A larger illumination, in the one case, as to the evidence for natural religion; and, in the other, as to the evidence for the religion of the gospel, will be the fruit of both these exercises. It is not the historical or the literary evidence for the truth of the Bible which Christianizes the philosophical inquirer. But it should lead him to read the Bible, and to go in quest of that evidence by which he is Christianized. Neither those credentials of the book which gain the assent of the philosopher, nor that precognition of the book which is taken by the peasant, are able of themselves to work that faith which is unto salvation. They fall short of awakening such a conviction as this in the breast of either—but they form like imperative claims on the attention of both. And it is in the train of this attention, earnest and prayerful and persevering, that the effective manifestation comes, by which the soul is turned from darkness unto light; and, as the fruit of this earnest heed to the word of the testimony, the day dawns and the day-star arises in the heart. The evidence lies in the Word. It is the entrance of the Word which gives light unto the simple. It is the Word which is a light unto his feet, and a lamp unto his paths. Whatever originated the attention at the first, however diverse the points from which the peasant and the philosopher have taken their respective departures—both must arrive at the same landing-place, and both must submit to be tutored by the same evidence at the last. The manifestation of the truth unto the conscience is made to each in the same way; and there is a common process by which they arrive at their common Christianity.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### ON THE EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE FOR THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. THE moral may be distinguished from the experimental evidence for the truth of Christianity thus. In the former, we look altogether to that which is objective—for the evidence is elicited by our comparison of one objective thing with another. The moral system contained in the Bible is clearly an objective matter of contemplation—presented to the mind in an outward volume, and made present to the mind in the act of perusing it. The abstract system, or the system of virtue as regarded accord-



ing to our own natural and anterior notions of it, may be viewed also in the light of that which is objective—as separate from the mind, and distinct from any of those facts or phenomena of which the mind is the subject. It is true, that the system of virtue in the Bible rectifies our own previous notions of it; and, by its enlightening effect upon the conscience, tends to assimilate more closely the ethical system of revelation with the ethical system of our now better-instructed human nature. At length, instead of the likeness, we come to feel the identity between these two; but this, instead of lessening the objective character of our contemplation, makes it more singly and strongly objective than before. When we make a study of Scripture, we immediately, and without any feeling of comparison, recognise the purity and perfection of those moral characteristics which enter into its ethical system; and so pronounce it worthy of having proceeded from the God who is at once the fountain and the exemplar of all righteousness.

2. And this objective nature of the things which engage our attention is fully sustained, when, instead of looking to the virtues of Scripture as the component parts of its ethical system, we look to them as embodied in the character of the Godhead. There is an evidence grounded on the accordancy which obtains between the representations in the Bible and our own previous notions of the Deity; and still more, when these notions are rectified by the Bible itself, to the appearance of which book in the world, we indeed owe the now purer and more enlightened theism of modern Europe. Still, when comparing God as set forth in Scripture with God as seen in the light of our own minds, we compare the objective with the objective; and this character is if possible enhanced, when, instead of recognising the likeness, we recognise the identity, and feel immediately, on our perusal of Scripture, that God himself is speaking to us, or that we are engaged in close and personal correspondence with God. It is when God thus announces Himself as present to us in the Bible, in His own characters of holiness and majesty, that this self-evidencing light is seen in its brightest manifestation. A simple uneducated peasant, when his eyes are opened to behold this, takes up immediately with Scripture as a communication from heaven—which, viewed altogether objectively by him, and without any reflex view of what passes within himself, makes direct revelation of its own divinity to his soul.

3. But though in the study of the moral evidence the mind is

altogether engaged objectively—it is not so in the study of the experimental evidence. Of the two parts of the tally which are here brought into comparison, the one is objective and the other subjective. It is on the accordancy between the sayings of Scripture and the findings of conscience that this evidence is chiefly founded—between the statements or proposals in the book of revelation on the one hand, and the facts or phenomena of our own felt and familiar nature upon the other. Yet to prepare us fully for a judgment on the experimental, we must attend to things connected with the moral evidence also. When the Bible, for example, affirms the great moral depravation of the human character—to meet this by an independent judgment of our own, we must be able to pronounce, not only on what man is, but on what man ought to be. In other words, there must be a conscience or moral faculty which takes cognizance of the right and the wrong, as well as a consciousness or faculty of internal observation which enters into the penetralia of our own bosom, and takes cognizance of the desires and the affections and the purposes that have their being and operation there.\*

4. That men possess, and that natively and universally, the faculty of conscience, or that faculty which takes cognizance of and makes distinction between the morally good and evil, is palpable to all observation. This faculty or power is in fact met with throughout all the members of the human family. Under all the varieties of light and obscurity, and with allowance for every modification of sentiment—still there is a general sense of right and wrong that is characteristic of our species—a feeling of approval and complacency associated with the former—a feeling of shame and dissatisfaction and remorse associated with the latter. This peculiarity of our nature obtains in all countries, and among all the conditions of humanity. Whatever the practice may be, there is a certain truth of perception as to the difference between good and evil everywhere. There is a law of rectitude to which in every nation, how degraded soever, a universal homage is yielded by the sensibilities of the heart—however little it may be yielded to by the practical habit of their

\* It is unfortunate that, in the use of language, the terms of conscience and consciousness are not kept as distinct from each other, as are the mental faculties which they express, and the provinces on which it is the part of these faculties respectively to expatiate. Consciousness has been strictly enough appropriated to its legitimate meaning; but conscience has been indiscriminately applied both to questions of right and wrong, and to questions which respect the actual state of one's own character.



lives. In a word, there is a morality recognised by all men—imprinting the deepest traces of itself on the vocabulary of every language, and marking the residence of a conscience in every bosom—insomuch that, go to any outcast tribe of wanderers—and, however sunk in barbarism, if we tell them of right and wrong, they will meet the demonstration with responding and intelligent sympathy. We do not speak to them in vocables unknown. There is a common feeling, a common understanding betwixt us—one ground of fellowship at least, on which the most enlightened missionary from Europe might hold converse with the rudest savages of the desert.

5. But again, this conscience, this sense of morality, does not exist alone in the heart. It is more or less followed up by a certain sense or conception of some rightful sovereign who planted it there. The feeling of a judge within the breast, is in no case altogether apart from the faith of a judge above, who sits as overseer upon the doings, and as arbiter of the destinies of men. The moral sense does not terminate or rest in the mere abstract relations of right or wrong; but is embodied into the belief of a substantive being, who dispenses the rewards that are due unto the one, and inflicts the penalties that are felt to be due unto the other. It is this which gives rise to the theology of conscience, more quick and powerful than the theology of academic demonstration—not so much an inference from the marks of design and harmony in external nature, as an instant suggestion from what is felt and what is feared within the recesses of our own bosom—because leading by one footstep from the felt supremacy of conscience within, to the feared supremacy of a God, the author of conscience, and who knoweth all things. It is a mistake to imagine of this theology, that it is not universal, or that any degree, whether of ignorance or corruption, can wholly obliterate it. It was not stifled by the polytheism of Greece and Rome. Neither is it extinct, as may be seen by their invocations to the Great Spirit, among the tribes of the American wilderness. In short, wherever men are to be found, there is the impression at least, of a reigning and a righteous God. When utterance is made of such a Being, even in the darkest places of the earth, they are not startled as if by the sound of a thing unknown. There is a ready coalescence with the theme—and as he speaks of God, and sin, and vengeance, there is a felt harmony between the conscience of the savage and the sermon of the missionary.



6. But there is a second faculty concerned in this matter of the experimental evidence, even the faculty of internal observation. Conscience, in the sense that we have just used it, is that faculty by which cognizance is taken of the good or the evil desert of conduct in general. But conscience by the use of language has obtained a meaning more extended than this. It is implicated with the faculty of consciousness; and so is made to take especial cognizance of one's own character, of one's own conduct.\* One man is said to speak to the conscience of another, when he speaks to the independent sense or knowledge which the other has of the state of his own heart and his own history. And certain it is, that never do we feel profounder veneration for any wisdom, than for that which searches and scrutinizes among the arcana of one's own nature, and comes to a right discernment thereupon. The man who can pronounce aright upon my character, and accurately read on this inner tablet the lineaments which I know to be graven there—the man who offers to me the picture of what I am; and I behold it to be at all points the faithful reflexion of what I feel myself to be—the man whose voice from without is thus responded to by the echo of conscience or of consciousness within—the man who can awaken this inhabitant of my bosom from his slumbers, and make him all alive to the truth of such a representation as he now perceives but never before adverted to—to such a man we render the homage due to an insight and a sagacity so marvellous. And at length, to border on our argument, this sagacity we might conceive enhanced into a discernment supernatural. It might amount to such a divination of the secrets of the heart, as nought but the interposal of the Divinity can explain. It might announce itself to be a higher wisdom than any upon earth, to be wisdom from above—and so draw the very acknowledgment which the first teachers of Christianity drew, to whom when an unlearned hearer listened, he was judged of all and convinced of all—and thus were the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he worshipped God, and reported that God was in them of a truth.

7. After these prefatory and general observations on the experimental evidence, we may now resolve it into three leading particulars—viewing it first as an evidence grounded on the accordancy which obtains between what the Bible says we are,

\* We have no doubt that the term is comprehensive of both these senses in Scripture—when mention is made of the manifestation of the truth unto the conscience.

and what we find ourselves to be—secondly, as an evidence grounded on the accordancy between what the Bible overtures for our acceptance, and what we feel ourselves to need—and third, or most strictly experimental, as an evidence grounded on the accordancy between what the Bible tells of the events, and the changes, and the advancements which take place in the mind of an exercised Christian, and what this Christian realizes in his own personal history, in the process which he actually describes, and the transitions from one state and one character to another which he actually undergoes.

8. I. The first thing then that might draw the regards of the inquirer to such a volume, and ultimately draw from him the acknowledgment of a felt conviction in its divinity, is, the insight which it manifested into the arcana of his own spirit—the perceived accordancy which obtains between what it said that he was, and what he felt himself to be—the marks, wherewith it abounded, of that shrewd and penetrating sagacity which can pronounce on the mysteries of the human character; and to which testimony from without, there is the echo of a respondent testimony from the conscience which is within us. There is no authorship so interesting as that which holds up to the reader the mirror of his own heart; and no wisdom to which we yield the homage of a readier admiration, than to that which can look through the deeds and the disguises of men. Now it is conceivable, that the volume in question might stand distinguished from all other authorship, by its profounder and more penetrating discernment into all the lurking places of our moral economy—so superior indeed to everything else of human authorship upon the subject, that, by this superiority alone, it might recommend itself to be superhuman. To the man who can find his way among the penetralia of my bosom, and utter himself aright as to the thoughts and the passions and the purposes that hold the mastery there—to such a man we should readily award the credit of a very high and powerful intelligence. Now one can figure, at least, the proofs of such an intelligence to be so multiplied, as to pass upwards from what we have experienced of the intelligence of a man, to what we conceive of the intelligence of a God. Were a prophet to stand before us, and, laying claim to a heavenly inspiration, were he to divine, and with unexcepted accuracy, all the thoughts of my heart and all the circumstances of my past history—this miraculous achievement would reconcile us to his pretensions. Now this very power and property

of divination, that such a gifted messenger from on high manifests in his oral testimony, he could transfer to the written testimony that he left behind him, for the instruction of distant ages—and thus what we should hold to be a satisfying evidence of his commission, were he alive, and did he address us in person, might be conveyed from his words to his writings, and compose a book which should announce in perpetual characters to all future generations, the high original from which it had descended.

9. A merely human author might recommend himself both to the confidence and the admiration of those who study him, by the reach and the penetration of that sagacity, wherewith he finds his way among the hidden yet the felt and conscious intimacies of the human character. Now this sagacity might be evinced by an authorship that professes to be divine, in a degree so marvellous—there might be so minute, and varied, and scrupulous an accordancy between its representations of our heart, and the responses given to them by that faculty within, which takes cognizance of its feelings and processes—the voice that is without may be so accurately reflected or echoed back again by the still small voice that issueth in whispers from the deeply-seated recesses of consciousness—as first to draw our regards towards a volume that holds up to observation such a picture of ourselves; and finally to decide our reliance upon it, as being indeed a communication that hath proceeded from a higher quarter than from any individual, or any party of individuals within the limits of our species. It is a conclusion, drawn from the correct scrutiny wherewith the author of this book enters among the arcana of the human constitution, and so pronounces of this microcosm within the breast, as to evince a superhuman acquaintance with its laws and its processes. This evidence is founded on the accordancy between what is in the book, and what is in the chamber of our own moral and spiritual economy. Our reading of the volume unfolds to us the one. The faculty of consciousness, awake and enlightened, unfolds to us the other; and the agreement between these two might be spread out and sustained in a way so evidently superhuman, as to evince that he who constructed the volume had a superhuman acquaintance with all the peculiarities, and the wants, and the phases of that nature to which it constantly refers, and for whose benefit it was framed. To come in contact with this evidence, we do not need to range abroad over the walks of a lofty or recondite scholar-



ship. The whole apparatus that seems requisite for the impression of it, is to be in possession of a Bible and of a conscience—and, with the readings of the one, to combine the reflections of the other.

10. There is one most notable example that might be given of this species of accordancy between what the book says that we are, and what we, should our attention be earnestly directed to ourselves and our consciences be prepared for an enlightened decision, must feel ourselves to be. We refer to the assertion that is so often repeated throughout the pages of this professed revelation of man's total and universal depravity. It was a fearful thing, with this high pretence of the Christian message to a Divine inspiration—it was a fearful thing thus to commit itself to an affirmation, on which it stood liable to be confronted with the experience of one and all of the human species. Had it spoken to us of distant things, in distant and by us unexplored parts of the universe, it might have been safe from all the cross-examinations of those on whom it had made the high demand of their faith and their obedience. Of that remote and lofty region it may have told us many things, without the hazard of any effectual resistance on the part of those who had no contrary experience of their own to oppose it. But when, in addition to things that lie afar, and which it professes to have fetched from the upper sanctuary—it tells us of things that lie within the precincts of our own daily and familiar experience; when, instead of bringing its informations from a land of dimness and mystery, it maketh averment in regard to such facts and phenomena as are accessible to all—more especially, when it ventures on the ground of a man's own heart and history; and proclaims to his face that such is the uniform character of the one, and such has been the uniform style and complexion of the other—when it speaks of that which is so near at hand, and stakes its credit on the affirmation of things within our own bosom, and that we therefore should intimately know. Then it comes under the ordeal of man's severest judgment, because, while it hath mortified his pride, it hath laid itself open to the scrutiny of his most close and intimate observation. Man hath no antecedent knowledge wherewith to confront the messenger who fetches down information from the altitudes of heaven; but he may be well able to confront him, when told of the things that lie within the grasp of his own consciousness—because all within the limits of his own moral and spiritual economy. He

may know, for example, whether he lives without God in the world. He may know whether or not there be such a thing as the fear of God before his eyes. It is a matter of fact that lies within the reach of his internal observation, whether the affection he bears to the things that are made hath wholly dispossessed him of the affection he owes to Him who formed all and who upholds all. He might know, upon prior and independent ground, whether he be justly chargeable with all that foul and fearful guilt which the Scriptures have so boldly denounced against him. Had they restricted their information to the things of heaven that are without our reach, they might have claimed the deference of our entire understanding, and reposed on the strength of their external evidence alone. But they have touched furthermore on the things of earth that are within our reach, and, in so doing, they have made an appeal to the consciences of men—they have placed themselves at the bar of a human reckoning, where, if they are convicted of error, the fallacy of their high pretensions will be instantly exposed; or where it may possibly be found that such is the marvellous truth even of their most singular and most startling affirmations, as to stamp upon this extraordinary volume the credit and the character of that divinity which it claims.

11. But, as in other examples, this part too of the subject-matter of Scripture has been turned into an objection against it. It is not to be told, how much of odium and resistance the affirmation in the Bible, of the blight or the great moral degeneracy wherewith our species have been smitten, has had to encounter. Had it kept on the ground of vague and inapplicable generalities, the doctrine might have been tolerated as a harmless or even a plausible speculation. But it has not only made a sweeping and indiscriminate charge against humanity in the lump; it has brought the charge so specifically home to each individual, it has sent it forth with an aim so pointed and so personal, that there is not any who can make his escape from it. While it has made broad and general accusation of all, it has also given such express and special direction of it to each and to every; it has spoken so unsparingly and in such unmeasured terms even of the loveliest of our kind; and, without regard to the varieties of the better or the worse, hath lifted the stern denunciation that none is righteous, no not one, that all the righteousness which our nature can claim is as filthy rags, that the whole world is guilty before God, that all are the children of wrath,

that all are the heirs of damnation. It is truly not to be wondered at—it is a most natural reaction on the part of arraigned and vilified humanity—it is just the revolt that we should have expected, and expected too from those of her children who were the loveliest in charity, or stood the most erect in the pride of their own native integrity and honour—when they shrink with veriest disgust from such a low and loathsome representation of our nature; and are heard to exclaim against it as the hateful dogma of a theology the most unfeeling and barbarous.

12. We feel too, that, by such an averment as this, invasion is made on the province of man's own natural and independent knowledge. It makes no transgression of its legitimate boundaries, when, on the question of the *quid oportet*, it claims a right of cognizance over both the terrestrial and the celestial ethics; and, on the question of the *quid est*, though it has given up the celestial to the informations of a messenger from heaven, yet, on the terrestrial field, it hath a prior and independent observation of its own, and can lay its immediate hold on all the facts which lie within the confines of sight and of experience. In virtue then of this ample cognizance which it is competent for it to take of the *quid oportet*, we should at least know what of duty we owe to the God who formed and who sustains us. And, in virtue of that more limited cognizance which we can take of the *quid est*, we may at least, one should think, venture so far as to judge of our own hearts and our own lives, and pronounce upon the home question of fact—whether this duty be actually rendered. At this part of the investigation, we stand upon that debateable ground, on which an adjustment ought to be made, between the light of conscience and observation or the light of nature on the one hand, and the light of a professed revelation on the other; and it is wholly impossible to avoid making reference to both. In this instance these two lights as it were cross each other, or rather, both have descended upon the same subject; and each hath given to it a special illumination of its own. They are like two witnesses who might be confronted either to their mutual discredit, or to their joint and honourable vindication. At all events, the one has uttered an affirmation in regard to a matter, upon which the other has an immediate eye; and, out of the discrepancy or out of the agreement between the utterance of the first and the finding of the second, we might draw a conclusion of highest importance to the claims and the credentials of both.



13. First then as to the *quid oportet* of this question, the duty or the ethical relation that subsists between the creature and his Creator—let nature be called in to pronounce upon it, and by the light too of her own principles. Let her but attend to the complete sovereignty on the one hand, and the as complete subordination upon the other. Let her think more especially of man, upholden in the mechanism of his delicate and complicated frame work, by the care of an unseen but unerring hand—of that wakeful guardianship which never for one moment is intermitted, and is kept up for years together under all the thoughtless ingratitude of him who is its object—of the thousand circumstances above all, of which the great and the living energy that is above us has the most perfect control, and, by the slightest defect or disproportion of any one of which we might be haunted all life long by the agony of a sore endurance—of the fact notwithstanding, that, throughout the vast majority of our days, there is perfect ease, and many precious intervals lighted up by positive enjoyment—of all the tenderness which this implies on the part of the Heavenly Father whose workmanship we are; and who spread around us an external nature, that teems with adaptations innumerable, to the senses and the organs where-with He himself has furnished us. Let us only think that on His simple will is suspended the difference between our annihilation and our being; and that, if by the withdrawment of His sustaining energy our heart should cease to beat or our blood to circulate, the change to each of us would be fully as momentous, as if all the lights of the universe were put out, and this earth and these heavens were swept away. Let us then think of this God, on whom we so wholly depend, calling for no other return, than the services of love to Himself, and of kindness to all the children of His family; and, in the rendering of which, we advance to the uttermost the worth and the dignity of our own nature. Let us think too of God as a Being concerned in the morality of His creatures; that He holds their virtue to be His glory, and their vice to be that nuisance upon the face of creation by which the high majesty of heaven is put to scorn. On these premises surely—on what we feel and know of the relationship between the thing that is formed and Him who has formed it, we might confidently say, whether aught can be named, that is a greater violence on the propriety of things, than the ingratitude of man to his Maker—or whether in all the records of jurisprudence any guilt can be specified, of more

deep and crimson dye, than the guilt of a careless and thoughtless and thankless ungodliness.

14. So much for the "*quid oportet*"—a question on which man can pronounce by his own moral light, even though it concerns the relationship in which he stands to those objects that are exalted above him, on the lofty and to him inaccessible region of the celestial ethics; and then as to the "*quid est*" of this argument—a question on which he may pronounce by the lights of memory and observation, when, as in the present instance, it is a question of fact, the materials of which lie near at hand on the surface of our terrestrial arena. The reply to this question glares upon us from the whole colour of our past history. There is a voice within the receptacles of the heart, that sends it in secret but impressive whispers to the ear of the inner man. It tells us, and with a power of moral evidence from which all escape is impossible, that we are aliens from God. It makes known to us, that a sense of the divinity is habitually absent from the mind; and that, in the busy engrossment of all our faculties with the things of sense and of time which are around us, there is scarcely the recognition of a God all the day long. One man walks on a more elevated path of patriotism, of philanthropy, and honour than another; but all of them walk in the independence of their own counsels. They have in truth cast off the authority of heaven, and it scarcely mingles any perceptible influence with the affairs or the occupations of men. Let there but be a correct analysis of human motives; and, amid the exceeding variety of those which have a deciding ascendancy over the spirit, we shall seldom, almost never, arrive at a simple devotedness to the will of the Maker. There is, on this subject, a very sore and unhappy delusion; and that has veiled the actual truth of the question from the eye of observers. In the absence of all piety, there is still many an upright and honourable motive by which the breast may be actuated; but it were an unphilosophical confounding of one thing with another, to allege these as any evidence of regard to a God, who, during the whole play and operation of these motives, is never perhaps thought of. There are divers principles, all of which may be good in their kind, and yet each of which may be distinct from the others. A sense of honour is good—instinctive humanity is good—the delicacy that recoils from aught that is unhallowed in word or in imagination is very beautiful and very good—the fidelity which spurns away all the temptations of interest is most



unquestionably good—the horror at cruelty ; the lively remembrances of gratitude to an earthly benefactor ; the tenderness, whether of filial or of parental affection ; the constancy of unalterable friendship ; the generous love of liberty ; the graceful sensibility that not only weeps over human wretchedness, but lavishes upon it of its succour as well as its sympathy—these are all so many features of the humanity wherewith we are clothed, and all of them are very good. But, as they are distinct the one from the other, so may they be distinct from that which is strictly and essentially the religious principle. They may exist apart from piety. They might have all a dwelling-place in that heart, within the repositories of which, the practical sense of God, or a principle of deference to His authority is not to be found. The man of native integrity is a nobler and a finer specimen of our kind, than the man of a creeping and ignoble selfishness. Yet the bosom of each may be alike desolate of piety. And this is the universal charge which is preferred against all the men of all the families of our species. It is not that all are destitute of benevolence or justice or truth—for this were experimentally untrue. But it is that all by nature are destitute of piety. It is not that the morality which reciprocates between man and man is extinct ; but it is that the morality which connects earth with heaven has been broken asunder ; and the world is now disjoined from that God, with whom it stood at one time in high and heavenly relationship. One might imagine the gravitation of our planet to the sun to be suspended ; and that it wandered on a strange excursion over the fields of immensity. Yet still it may bear along with it the very laws and processes, which, independently of the great central body in our system, now obtain within the limits of this lower world. It may retain, even in the darkness of its wayward and unregulated course—it may retain its chemistry, and its magnetism, and the cohesion of its parts, and the attraction at least which maintains its own spherical form and binds the sea and the atmosphere and all that is around it to its surface. And so in the moral economy. There may be the disruption of our species from their God. The world they inhabit may have become an outcast from the region of the celestial ethics. The great family of mankind may have wandered from Him who is their Head. The affinity which at one time obtained between God and the creatures of this lower world may have been dissolved, and yet there may still be in operation, many a powerful and many a



precious affinity among themselves. There may be the reciprocal play, even throughout this alienated planet of ours, of good affections and tender sympathies and many amiable and moral and neighbour-like regards. There is an earth-born virtue that will mingle with the passions and atrocities of the human character, and mitigate the else darker aspect of human affairs—and yet it may remain a truth, not merely announced by Scripture, but confirmed by experience, that nature hath renounced her wonted alliance with the Divinity, that the world hath departed from its God.

15. That indeed is a woful delusion by which the natural graces and virtues of the human character are pled in mitigation of its ungodliness. When beheld in their true light, they enhance and they aggravate the charge. For what, after all, are these virtues? Who gave us the moral constitution of which they form a part and an ornament? Who is it that causes the pulse of an honourable man so to beat in the pride of a high-minded integrity? Who poured the milk of human kindness into the economy of our affections? Who is it that attuned the heart to those manifold sympathies by which it is actuated? Who gave the delightful sensibilities of nature their play, and sent forth the charities of life to bless and to gladden the whole aspect of human society? Who is the author of this beneficial mechanism; and by whose hand has so much of this boasted loveliness been spread over the aspect of our species? The very Being who pencilled all the glories of nature's landscape, is the Being who strewed the moral landscape by all the graces wherewith it is adorned. Each virtue, which serves to deck and to dignify our nature, is an additional obligation to Him who is the author of it. It calls for a louder gratitude to Him who has so liberally endowed us; and therefore stamps a deeper atrocity on our ungrateful disregard of Him. These moral accomplishments are so many gifts, that only inflict the stain of a fouler turpitude on our indifference to the Giver, and make the state of practical atheism in which we live to be still more enormous.

16. We have already given an illustration of the moral by the natural philosophy.\* In the latter science, we know how to distinguish the facts from the mathematics; and we are perfectly aware that the mathematics which avail for the terrestrial, avail for the celestial physics also. It is conceivable that every

\* See our "Natural Theology," Book I., chap. ii. art. 28-36.

object of the celestial physics may somehow or other be shrouded from the discernment of our species ; that all which is known of the material heavens might pass into oblivion, and be beyond the power of our recalment ; that thus all the celestial of natural philosophy might vanish away from the sight and the remembrance of men. This were the ruin of our astronomy ; but it would not be the ruin of our mathematics—all the principles of which would still abide in the world, and admit of the same application as before to the objects and the distances on the face of our earth. And so it is with the celestial in moral philosophy. There is a distinction to be made here too ; and the distinction is between the objects of the science and the ethics of the science. Here also it is conceivable that the objects of the heavenly region may be forgotten ; yet the ethics would remain, and continue to have an application to the objects of the earthly region. Just as there is a mathematics that would survive the extinction of astronomy—so there is a morals that would survive the extinction of our theology ; and as the mere existence of the mathematics bears no evidence to there being an astronomy, after that all the objects of this science cease to be remembered—so the mere existence of a morals bears no evidence to the godliness of man, after that God has ceased to be regarded by them.

17. But these considerations, however fit to be addressed to those who philosophize on the subjects of moral science, are vastly too general to be of any efficacy with the unlettered multitude. And therefore it is well that the delusion which we now endeavour to expose, is not the one by which they are most liable to be misled. They see the truth more in its nakedness. It is not so hidden from their view by the gloss of sentimentalism—nor in humble life, must it be confessed, do there exist so many of those graces and plausibilities of character which have served, but served most unjustly, to alleviate, among the higher classes of society, the felt guilt of their real and practical indifference to God. This guilt, wherewith the book in question charges one and all of the children of humanity, it is found of the unsophisticated peasant, that he more willingly takes home than the votary either of imagination or of science. There lies, as it were, a more open and unobstructed avenue between the volume in his hand, and the conscience that lies within his heart ; so that the representations given by the one are more frequently and faithfully responded to by the echo of a consenting testimony on the part of the other. It is thus that the

evidence in question multiplies upon his observation, more than it often does on a reader of lofty scholarship and academic cultivation; and that whether Scripture tells him of the moral disease that is upon his spirit, or proposes to him its own remedy for the removal of it—there is a coalescence between all that he feels within himself, and all that he descries on the outer page of revelation. The very simplicity of his mind lays it open to a more correct impression of the external truth; and his exemption from the prejudices of taste and vanity and refinement favours a clearer discernment both of the matters that lie within the recesses of the inner man, and which are cognizable by conscience alone, and also of the matters that lie on the face of the world and of general society, on which even the homely and unlettered peasant is often known to cast an eye of most intelligent observation. It is thus that, having access on the one hand to the volume of a profest revelation, and access on the other to the whole of that home territory which forms the scene or the subject of many of its descriptions, he has two sides of a comparison, from the one to the other of which, there might be a busy play and interchange between the readings of the book and the reflections of an independent consciousness. It is the sustained and the varied and the unexcepted coincidence between the sayings of the volume and the findings of him who peruses it—it is this which constitutes the internal evidence on which we now insist. It is this which, even at the very outset of our inquiries, stamps a verisimilitude on this professed record of an embassy from heaven—a verisimilitude that we believe will, with every honest and persevering inquirer, be heightened at length into the impression, and that not a fanciful, but a most rational and well-warranted impression of its verity—so as to make stand out, even to the eye of our general population, such marks and characters on the face of the volume itself, as might palpably announce to them the divinity that penned it.

18. There is the philosophy of the subject as well as its poetry in the following beautiful lines of Cowper, when he compares the happier intelligence of a poor and an aged female with that of Voltaire—

“She for her humble sphere by nature fit,  
Of little understanding and no wit,  
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,  
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;  
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes  
Her title to a treasure in the skies.



“O happy peasant, O unhappy bard—  
His the mere tinsel, her's the rich reward.  
He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,  
She, never heard of half a mile from home ;  
He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,  
She safe in the simplicity of hers.”

19. It should be remarked, that, though in illustrating this branch of the experimental evidence, we confine ourselves to the affirmation which the Bible makes of human depravity, this is but one example of the accordancy which obtains between the statements of Scripture and the felt state of the human heart. The Bible is instinct throughout with this evidence—so that a reader, at once enlightened in the knowledge of himself and in the knowledge of that book which pictures man forth to the eye of his own consciousness, feels in the perusal of it a powerful and penetrating intelligence lighting up its pages. Even the one doctrine of man's moral depravation is set forth, not nakedly and dogmatically like the article of a creed, but often with incidental touches of graphic and descriptive accuracy which awaken the most vivid recognition in the mind ; so that when telling in various ways of man's alienation, of his “living without God in the world,” of his “not seeking after God,” of “God not being in all his thoughts,” of his “loving the creature more than the Creator,” of God being a “wilderness and a weariness” unto him, of his “walking in the counsel of his own heart and after the sight of his own eyes,” of his “turning every man to his own way”—these sayings come home to consciences made alive, and serve to build up, at length to establish, the confidence of the reader, whose repeated observation of the Bible as an unfailing discerner leads him to submit to it as an infallible guide.

20. Even in the readings of ordinary authorship, when either a faithful picture is rendered of human manners, or a correct delineation is given of the human heart—how quick and vivid is our perception of the likeness. To the voice of the witness from without, there is an instant echo given by conscience which is the witness in our bosom. The remarkable thing is, that in this way a skilful observer can make us recognise, and that immediately, what we have never adverted to before ; and what, but for him, might ever have remained among the unnoticed peculiarities of our own character. The truth is, that within the recesses of one's own breast, there may lurk a variety of affections that are of daily and hourly influence, but of

which to this moment we have been wholly unconscious—having never once cast an eye upon them of reflex observation.\* But on the moment that some sagacious acquaintance, or some profound and penetrating writer, bath by his shrewd remark directed our eye towards them—it is a remark the truth of which we may instantly recognise, and a flood of new light is made to break in upon the before unrevealed mysteries of the soul. This is what has well been called the manifestation of the truth unto the conscience—a manifestation that is instantly followed up by the consent of the inward faculty to the outward affirmations—which affirmations, we repeat, might be so varied, and reach so far among the recesses and profundities of the human constitution, and be so evidently beyond the compass of all human sagacity—that when actually either heard or read from without, and then responded to by the light of one's own conscience from within, they might impress, and most warrantably impress, the belief that they have proceeded from a sublimer and more searching intellect than any which is to be found among mortals here below.

21. Now what is the nature of those scriptural affirmations which conscience may try and may decide upon? They relate of course to those matters which fall within the recognition of this faculty, or lie upon that territory over which its view is extended. It is indeed a most peculiar averment on the part of the Bible, when it announces, and that without reserve or modification, the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart; when it predicates not of one mind but of every mind which has not been transformed by the influence of its own doctrines, that it is enmity against God; when it casts abroad over the face of a world teeming with specimens of humanity, the charge that in each and all of these specimens we shall detect such a love to the creature as is exclusive of love to the Creator; when, with the most unveering and unabating consistency, it charges a great moral and spiritual corruption on all the members of the human family—inasmuch as to affirm that there is none righteous, no not one, and that all are so much by nature the children of disobedience as by nature to be the children of wrath. On this particular ground, the Bible stands aloof from every composition that has not borrowed from its own pages. We meet with nothing like it in the whole region of authorship. There is misanthropy we admit. There is the indignation of man against

\* See this further explained in our "Natural Theology," Book IV., chap. i., art. 3 and 4.

his fellows. There are satire and severity and sentiment directed against the vices of society. There is the soreness of human feeling on the part of those who have been outraged of their rights, or mortified in their vanity, or driven to spleen and to solitude by some morbid peculiarity of temperament, and there find relief from their agitations by wreaking a wholesale contempt upon the species. There is the distempered eloquence of Rousseau, and there is the darkly vindictive poetry of Byron, and there is the biting irony of Swift, all arraiguing the nature which they wear. But each is evidently asserting his own controversy. Each of them is avenging his own quarrel. It is not the ungodliness of man which forms any article of their impeachment against him. Theirs is all an indictment preferred against men for their universal deceit and malignity, the one against the other; and, with such a tone of resentfulness too, as implies that they had felt themselves to be the sufferers. It is in the Bible alone where we see an indictment preferred against our whole species in the name of God. It is there alone where the universal charge is advanced, of departure and revolt against Him who made them. It is there alone, where, without any tincture from the soreness of wounded humanity, we meet with the grave and unimpassioned, and at the same time most decisive and persevering assertion of a great controversy, between God and all that is human in this world's wide and peopled territory. It is there that, in the records of an embassy, the profest object of which is not to retaliate upon man by severe denunciation, but to reconcile him by the offers of pardon, he is charged with a sinfulness as universal among the individuals of his race as is the death which they have to undergo. It is not with the Bible as it is with the capricious judgment of man upon his fellows, who at one time pours forth upon them the vindictiveness of his injured feelings, and at another would clothe them in almost poetic excellence—ever changing his impression of the species with the varying hue of the individuals who pass before him; and, under the impulse of his wayward imagination, vilifying or idolizing his own nature, just as self is affected by it. There is something which stands most manifestly and separately out from all this in the one constant deliverance of Scripture, which, without faltering, affirms this province of God to be in deepest rebellion against Him; and that in reference to Him all have come under a curse, and all are dead in trespasses and in sins.



22. Now for the manifestation of the truth of this word unto the conscience, it is not necessary that each should have a conscience for all ; it is enough that he has a conscience for himself. It is enough that each individual man carries home to himself what the Bible says of all men. What is true of all, is true of every ; and though each reader should retire within the chamber of his own separate consciousness, he will find materials there with which he can confront the Bible, and bring it to the test of a comparison between what it confidently says and what he certainly knows. He will be able to convict this book of rash and ignorant affirmation, if, on consulting his own heart, he ascertains that it loves God ; or if, on reviewing his own life, he finds that he lives with God in the world ; or if, on reflecting upon his own tastes, he can aver that no created good has such charms for him, as has the Being from whom it all originated ; or if, on considering what the prospects are which chiefly engross and delight his imagination, he can say with conscious assurance that it is the prospect of a glorious eternity in Heaven, and not of some fair resting-place within the verge of our lower world. If these be indeed the habits of his nature, then has the Bible put itself into his power, and furnished him with a weapon by which he can disprove and may disown it. But if, instead of speaking against, it in every particular speaks with his intimate experience ; if, on entering the penetralia of his inner man, it there evinces itself to be indeed a most piercing and enlightened discerner ; if, on reading its pages, he is conscious all the while that he is reading the characters of his own soul, and is holding converse with an author whose eye and whose intellect has taken a correct survey of his moral constitution throughout all its hiding places ; if, through the consenting testimony of his own heart, every charge brought against man in the Bible is followed up by the conviction that of him at least, and of his heart it is true ; if he is sensible that he really is all that the Bible affirms man apart from the transforming influence of its own doctrine to be—that he lives without God and without hope in the world—that, unmindful of the desire of his Maker, he follows after the desires of his own flesh and his own mind—that, whatever the power may be of civil and natural restraints over his conduct, the direct authority of God has no presiding influence over him—that he neither seeks after his Maker, nor cares to understand Him—that he either dreads God or practically disowns Him, and at all events has no filial confidence or affection towards Him—

that self and sense and time are his idols; and that God is too far removed in the distant heavens, and the ultimate enjoyment of His presence too far removed in the distant eternity, to be motives of any ascendancy over the doings or the deliberations of his personal history in the world. If he read all this in the Bible, and conscience respond to it all in his own bosom, then might we not conceive such readings to be so multiplied, and such responses in every instance to be so accordant with them, as to stamp on this book all the credit of the inspiration which it claims.

23. There is no wisdom which so commands our reverence as that which evinces its discernment of man; as that which can enter the recesses of the heart, and there detect all its lurking and unseen tendencies; as that by which our mysterious nature is probed and penetrated, and there are brought out, to the conviction of those who wear it, the lineaments which are actually thereupon engraven. We must all be sensible of the charm with which we have looked to a picture of human life, the fidelity of which we recognise; and also of the homage we render to him who can shrewdly find his way through the ambiguities of the human character, and lay before us, in just delineation, the various feelings and principles which belong to it. There is no way in which one man could earn from another the credit of a more marvellous sagacity, than by presenting him with a copy of himself that his own conscience told him was true to the original—and that, just in proportion to the number of the lines of resemblance that he introduced, and to the secrecy in which they lay wrapt from common or general observation. But in this way, is it possible to conceive, that the marvellous may rise into the miraculous; and, instead of a skilful moralist, may he who thus anatomizes my mental frame and reveals to me its structure and its parts, impress me with the belief of a gifted apostle; and whether I hear from his own mouth the divinations that he has practised upon me, or read it in the authorship that he has left behind him, may I be led to the very exclamation of those early converts to our faith, who felt that the secrets of their hearts had by their teachers been made manifest, and so they fell down upon their face, and worshipped God, and reported that God was in them of a truth.

24. There is a peculiarity which often belongs to the informations of him who tells me that which passes within the limits of my own moral nature, which does not belong to him who tells



me of that which passes without the limits either of my consciousness or of my own personal observation. He who relates to me the things which take place at a distance, may relate such things as my eye never saw and my ears never heard of, and which, therefore, impress me with all the strangeness of novelties, in the truth of which I have no other ground of reliance than the testimony of my informer. He who relates to me the things which take place within the chambers of my own heart, may relate to me such things as I have often felt and daily continue to feel; but they may at the same time be such things as I have always suffered to pass away, without remembrance and without observation. But it is very possible that the thing which I at one time felt, and then instantly forgot, and would have forgotten for ever, may reappear upon the memory, the moment that I am told of it. An acquaintance may remind me of an event which took place on some past day of my existence, that but for his doing so would never again have been present to my thoughts, till the hour of my departure from the world. By a simple statement of the circumstances, he may bring up again to my most distinct and vivid recollection, that which had long sunk into the abyss of forgetfulness, and but for him might have remained there for ever. And what is true of a forgotten event in my history, is just as true of many of the forgotten emotions of my heart. A moralist may recall them to my notice, and I, upon his doing so, may instantly recognise them to have been my emotions; and he may turn them into the materials upon which he announces some principle or general law of my moral nature; and I may be struck with this law as the accurately just expression of what I had often felt, but never till now had reflected upon; and thus it is, that, while when the traveller relates what is beyond the range of my observation I may have nought to rely on but his testimony, when the moralist relates what passes in the busy receptacle of my own feelings, a thousand recollections may immediately start as it were from the slumbers of oblivion, and be vouchers for him that he is a true discerner. In one sense what he affirms is a novelty—for, though it be all about the daily and familiar processes of my own mind, yet they are such processes as I had never registered, but suffered all along to escape from my consciousness entirely. Yet in another sense, it is not a novelty—for now that he relates the mental feeling or mental operation, my own memory responds to the truth of it, and I now know to be true that of which I never before noticed



the existence—and, though I see in consequence what I never saw before, yet this is simply because I never looked upon it before—and, now that I do look upon it, I cannot fail to recognise it as the unregarded companion of many a former day, as the inmate perhaps of my hourly and most familiar experience.

25. Thus it is that one man may diffuse a light over the field of another man's conscience; and guide him to the discernment of things which respect himself, and yet which he never before adverted to; and attest of him what he has not once observed, but what notwithstanding he on the instant recognises to be true; and by a succession of bare statements, may gain at every step upon his confidence—for, no sooner does the one relate than the other may recall; and the affirmations of the former may be met by the inward responses of the latter; and as the teacher draws, so to speak, the map of man's moral constitution, the traces which had long faded away from the remembrance of the scholar, may again come forth into visibility. It is thus that one man may not only tell to another such things as respect himself, and which he already knows—but he may also discover to him such things which respect himself and are daily present with him as he does not know. They are the things which he does neither notice at the time, nor remember afterwards—the fugitive sensations which pass through his heart in busy and perpetual career, to which he does not advert himself, but which he would instantly recollect and recognise were another to advert to them. It is this which gives such a charm to the descriptive poetry of him who often pictures what all must have felt, yet never may have reflected upon—and which confers such an interest on the performance of one man, when he holds up to another man the mirror of himself—and which invests the philosophic sage who has made our common nature the province of his studious and skilful observation, with the credit of being a quick and a powerful discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart—one perhaps who can pierce and divide asunder his way through all the dormancies of another's unconsciousness, and can awaken in the bosom of many a disciple such recollections as had been long asleep, and out of these recollections can furnish each with his own image so as that he himself may recognise it. And thus, again, without any argumentative process at all, without inference and without logical demonstration, but solely by judicious statements recommending themselves and approving their own truth to every man's conscience,

may new and sound and most important lessons of moral wisdom be conveyed.

26. II. The second branch of the experimental evidence which we proposed to expound, lies in the accordancy between what the Bible overtures for our acceptance, and what we feel ourselves to need. Like the first it requires a comparison between the objective and the subjective. Even previous to our contemplation of the overtures of relief, our felt need of relief could only have arisen from a regard had by us to both—that is, to the objective, when we think of the character of God the lawgiver; and to the subjective, when we think of our own character as the subjects of His law. With our actual moral nature, we cannot escape from the impression of a reigning and righteous sovereign, who cannot be mocked, but whose authority, if trampled on, must be some way vindicated and maintained. On the other hand, we can as little escape from the consciousness of being defaulters to that high and holy government under which we sit; and the most direct and palpable vindication of which were the condemnation and adequate punishment of the offenders. And thus a sense of our disruption from God, and of His displeasure against us may be said to haunt us continually. It is true that, for the greater part of life, we live in a state of exemption from this sore disquietude—not however because we have laid our confident hold on any relief or reconciliation which has been authentically proposed to us; but because, in the manifold engagements of the world, we have the faculty of committing the whole subject to oblivion, and can live at ease, simply because the thought of an angry God or of a coming vengeance is away from our hearts. It is not because we have made up the quarrel; but it is when we forget the quarrel, that we slumber in the tranquillity of our deep and fatal unconsciousness. When made fully awake to the realities of our condition there is an unavoidable sense of necessity and of danger; and, with even nothing but the theology of conscience brought home to the bosom of guilty man, there is enough to excite his fears in the apprehended frown of the God who is above him, in the anticipated terrors of the judgment which is before him.

27. On this subject conscience, when once made alive, gets the better of all those representations which are made of God, by the expounders of a poetic or sentimental theism. There is a disposition to merge all the characteristics of the Divinity into one :



and while with many of our most eminent writers, the exuberant goodness, the soft and yielding benignity, the mercy that overlooks and makes liberal allowance for the infirmities of human weakness, have been fondly and most abundantly dwelt upon—there has been what the French would call, if not a studied, at least an actually observed *réticence*, on the subject of His truth and purity, and His hatred of moral evil. There can be no government without a law; and the question is little entertained—how are the violations of that law to be disposed of? Every law has its sanctions—the hopes of proffered reward on the one hand, the fears of threatened vengeance upon the other. Is the vengeance to be threatened only, but never to be executed? Is guilt only to be dealt with by proclamations that go before, but never by punishments that are to follow? What becomes of the truth or the dignity of heaven's government—if man is to rebel, and God, stripped of every attribute but tenderness, can give no demonstration of His incensed and violated majesty? There is positively no law, if there be not a force and a certainty in its sanctions. Take away from jurisprudence its penalties, or, what were still worse, let the penalties only be denounced but never be exacted; and we reduce the whole to an unsubstantial mockery. The fabric of moral government falls to pieces; and, instead of a great presiding authority in the universe, we have a subverted throne and a degraded sovereign. If the lawgiver in his treatment of sin is to betray a perpetual vacillation; if at one time sin shall be the object of high-sounding but empty menaces, and at another be connived at or even looked to by an indulgent God with complacency; if there is only to be the parade of a judicial economy, without any of its power or its performance; if the truth is only to be kept in the promises of reward, but as constantly to be receded from in the threats of vengeance; if the judge is thus to be lost in the overweening parent—then there is positively nothing of a moral government over us but the name. We are not the subjects of God's authority; we are but the fondlings of His regard. Under a system like this, the whole universe would drift, as it were, into a state of anarchy; and, in the uproar of this wild misrule, the King who sitteth on high, would lose his hold on the creation that he had formed.

28. It is impossible to pursue this speculation into its consequences, without being shut up unto the conclusion, that there is indeed a moral government; and, if so, that there is indeed a



law with its accompanying sanctions; and again, if so, that guilt and condemnation, that sin and punishment, follow in the train of each other. Now what we complain of is, that, in the great majority of our writers on natural theism, while a moral government is admitted in the general, the doctrine is not at all carried out to its specific applications. There is nothing done to dispose of the palpable fact which glares so obviously upon us, that the rule of this government has been transgressed by every individual of the human species; and that all, without exception, have become amenable to the high jurisdiction of heaven for their gross and repeated violations of it. Either this government, then, must resign its authority and honour; or man is in that fearful dilemma, from which it deeply concerns one and all of us to know how it is that we can possibly be extricated. Now this is a question which the advocates of natural theism have scarcely ever offered to dispose of. By far the greatest number of them have blinked it altogether, or at least left it wholly unresolved. It remains with almost every one of them in the state of an unsettled problem; and though both the character of God and the destinies of man are most essentially involved in it, yet if touched by any, it is with a very delicate and undecided hand. It is no vindication, that it lies not within the limits of their department. It is very true that it lies not within their limits in the shape of a doctrine. But it lies within their limits in the shape of a desideratum. They know as much both of the "*quid oportet*" and the "*quid est*," as to assure them of the conclusion, that all men have done despite to the authority of heaven—and the yet unresolved difficulty is, how can it consist with the truth and the unchangeableness of this authority, that the High and the Holy One, whose dwelling-place is among the sublimities of an unapproachable sacredness, how can He again look on His polluted creatures with complacency? How, in a word, is the compromise to be struck between the mercy of God and the majesty of His government; and in what terms shall that deed of amnesty be framed, which both provides an outlet for the Divine goodness on a sinful world, and inflicts not an irreparable blow on the other lofty and unchangeable attributes of His nature?

29. It may not be for the expounder of moral science to find a positive reply to this question. He may not be in possession of resources for the solution of it: but there lie within his reach the materials for the enunciation of it; and this enunciation he

ought to have bequeathed or handed over to the professor of the Christian theology. With the former it lies in the shape of an unreduced formula—a formula which he at least is able to construct, though not able to pass through the intermediate steps to the final resolution of it. Now it is the preparation of these formulæ that appears to us the most important service which moral philosophy can render. It can collect the data for the construction of questions, and then present them for solution to the disciples of another and higher calculus. And how shall that God who hath both the truth of a righteous and the authority of a powerful sovereign—how shall He take sinners into acceptance, is just one of these questions. How, without the disgrace, and indeed the overthrow of heaven's jurisdiction, can heaven ever be entered by those who have rebelled against the King who sitteth on its throne—this, it may not be the part of moral philosophy to pronounce upon as a doctrine; but altogether its part to make it over as a difficulty to those who can resolve it. The error is, not that it has failed to make out the account. But the error is that it has closed the account, and so sends away its disciples with the impression of a sufficiency which it cannot realize. We do not require of it to put forth a physician's hand to a disease which lies beyond the reach of its prescriptions. But we require of it as full and fair an exhibition as it can give of the disease. We charge it with having misled its votaries into a false and ruinous security—with having said peace when there was no peace—with the soft and the soothing whispers which it has given forth, when it ought to have sounded the trumpet of alarm—and, in the face of those intimations which even nature hath uttered of a fearful and unsettled controversy, with having suppressed every warning of the danger; and, by the lullaby of a delusive eloquence, having hushed all its votaries to sleep among the urgencies of an impending storm.

30. And it is further to be observed of this question, that, if left undetermined, it not only casts an ambiguity on the character of God in heaven, but it throws into a state of utter precariousness the cause of human virtue upon earth. The question is—if mercy shall be rendered at the expense of justice, at what point in the scale of moral worth or of moral worthlessness, shall the one attribute give way to the other? If all have sinned, but in spite of this the mercy of God advances a certain way over the domain of humanity, it is a most natural, and we should think a



most needful inquiry—how far? By what line are the outcasts of condemnation, to whom no forgiveness can be extended, separated from those who are within the confines of pardon and pity from on high? The truth is, that, in the absence of all that is clear and all that is definite, every man will suit the reply to his own imagination; or, what is likelier still, to his own convenience. The law of heaven will be brought down to a degrading compromise with human corruption and human indolence. Each will make the adjustment for himself; and, sinning just as much as he likes, will still figure that the indulgence of the God who knoweth our frame, and will make merciful allowance for all its infirmities—will be extended too to his own frailties and his own errors. The attributes of the Godhead will be made to play fast and loose with each other; and so as to accommodate the standard of the Divine exactions to the ever-varying practice of men. There is a scale of moral worth that comprehends all the varieties of character in our world—up from the loveliest and most honourable of the species, down to those who are sunk in the worst excesses of profligacy; and, as none can say, at what point in this scale the momentous transition in question is situated, each will determine it for himself; and so be able to combine the peace of his own spirit, with the full indulgence of all its waywardness. He will sin just as much as he likes; and yet he will hope just as largely as his own fancy or his own wishes can carry him. He will give himself up to his own impulses in this world, and yet be as little disturbed by the prospect of another as if he fetched every practical impulse of his life from the will of Him who has the disposal both of his time and of his eternity. It is thus that a deep and fatal security hath spread itself over the face of our alienated world; that men, even in the very midst of their rebellion, have no disturbance whatever from their fears; that under all the gradations of morality, even down to the malefactor's cell, there is still a vague confidence in the mercy of God; that they do not tremble under a sense of His justice, because they have confounded the attributes at their pleasure, and made the one to efface the character of the other. All is loose and obscure and indeterminate, under the lax administration of a law, whose sanctions have no fulfilment, whose threats have no significancy. This we hold to be the state of our academic theism, and a state the more dangerous, because of that seeming air of completeness and sufficiency wherewith she has finished off the ample round of her demonstrations. She



looks with all the complacency of having done a full and a finished achievement, and that without one utterance on man's universal sinfulness—making no provision for the offended dignity of God in heaven, and no provision for the prostrate cause of godliness upon earth.

31. It is well that the conscience of man is often too strong, both for the lethargy of nature, and for the allusions of this sentimental theism. The soul of him who rightly contrasts the sacredness of the Divinity with the exceeding sinfulness of his own character, will not be so easily satisfied with the soft and flimsy representations which are often given of heaven's clemency. His moral nature, now quickened into adequate sensibility, must be otherwise met; and unless there be a revelation of mercy that makes full provision for the justice, and truth, and authority of the Godhead, he neither can view the Lawgiver as at peace with him nor himself as safe.

32. It is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and there alone, that he finds that precise counterpart which at once meets this difficulty and resolves it—a constitution of forgiveness which makes full exhibition of the Divine character, without any violation to the jurisprudence of the upper sanctuary, or any conflict and concussion between the attributes of the High and the Holy one who presides over it.\* The atonement of the cross adjusts all,

\* So that beside the moral and the experimental, there is what may be called the doctrinal, as a branch of the internal evidence of Christianity—an evidence that results, not from the comparison of the objective truth with the subjective mind, but from the comparison of one truth or one doctrine of Christianity with another. The whole scheme, viewed objectively, may abound in those symphonies or adaptations of part to part, which might serve to recommend it as founded in wisdom, or as having a real foundation in the nature of things. The resulting evidence might be illustrated in this way. We can imagine the human bearers of a professed message from some distant part of the universe, to report certain peculiarities of its astronomical or physical system, which prove that matter there is under a law of gravitation different from our own; and yet that by a profound mathematics, each special phenomenon can be demonstrated to be a consequence of that law, which harmonizes all the separate informations, and gives consistency to them all. Let the apostles of such a revelation be simple and illiterate men, and palpably ignorant of mathematics—so as to make it obvious, that the distinct things which they tell could not have been deduced by any reasoning process of their own. Then the dependence, the mathematical dependence of these things, argues that they must have received by information what they could not evolve by reasoning; and the consistency which obtains in the matter of their revelation speaks for the truth of it. Now the same might apply to the agreements, the profound and exquisite agreements, which obtain between the parts of the spiritual system—too manifold, and perhaps too recondite, to have been devised by the messengers who have been the bearers of it—thus evincing the transcendental wisdom or truth from which it must have had its rise. The doctrine of the atonement is far from being the only, though perhaps the most conspicuous, and certainly the most important exemplification of this—providing the freest

reconciles all. It is the intelligent view of this great mystery which lets in a flood of light on the mind of the beholder—as he discerns the impress of infinite love and infinite sacredness on that wondrous scheme, in the contemplation of which he finds all the misgivings of his own guilty nature appeased, and yet his reverence for the divine nature unbroken.

33. This much on the second experimental evidence for the truth of a professed revelation—the first being the accordancy between the statements which are there made, and the felt state of the human heart. The second is founded on the accordancy between the felt wants of our nature, and the provision that is there intimated to have been made for them. Both serve to manifest a power of divination. By the one it proves itself a skilful diviner of our thoughts; by the other, a skilful diviner of our necessities. Had we time to expatiate on this second argument, we think it might be made palpable, that the hand of a God may be as directly inferred, from the adaptations which there are in the book of a professed revelation to the wants and the wellbeing of our moral economy—as from the adaptations which there are in the book of external nature to the wants and the wellbeing of our natural economy. If the beauty that regales the eye, if the music that charms the ear, if the food that appeases the hunger and sustains the else decaying body in health and vigour, if the many fitnesses of outward things to the senses and the convenience of man; if on these there can be validly founded the conclusion, that the same God who constructed our material framework, may also be traced in the manifold congruities of the surrounding materialism—then might there likewise be such a varied suitableness between the needs and the fears and the appetencies of man's spirit on the one hand, and the doctrines or the directions of that volume which is addressed to him on the other, as to put the legible impress of a presiding

and largest outlet for the divine mercy, and yet casting thereby a brighter radiance over the other attributes of the Godhead, and more especially over the divine holiness. The more intensely this is viewed, the deeper is the insight which it gives of Christianity, as a well-compacted system, that, instead of being devised by man, originated with Him who presides over the harmonies, of truth and of the universe. The more that the understanding is illuminated to behold the truths of Scripture and their relations, the more will it appreciate the Bible as a well of hidden wisdom that is fathomless; and the more will it perceive the significancy of the expression "the unsearchable riches of Christ." This doctrinal evidence is entitled to a distinct chapter by itself. But we must stop somewhere—for however far we might prosecute the theme, we should still leave unfinished an argument that is in truth exhaustless.



and an inspiring divinity upon its pages. Were full development given to this most interesting conclusion, we think that the evidence of a designing God may be made to shine forth as directly from His word, as it does from His works. And if we will only think of the vivid recognition, which even the most unlettered of our peasantry can take of his necessities and his dangers ; and also of the distinct intelligence wherewith he can lay hold of the simplicities of Scripture—we shall perceive that between the one and the other, he may have all the materials within his reach for the argument before us. Let us add to this consideration the principle upon which Dr. Paley holds anatomy to be a better substratum on which to rear an argument for a God than astronomy. Let us think with him, that, within a narrow compass, the relations of fitness may be so crowded, as to give more intense proof of a divinity, than can the sublime but simple relations which obtain in the celestial machinery of the firmament—and then, perhaps, we may apprehend, how even the homeliest of our population, with nought but the Bible in his hand, and in his breast the microcosm of his own spirit, may nevertheless discern so many adaptations between the directions of the one and the desires or even diseases of the other, as to arrest him with the well-warranted conviction of the same divinity having been concerned in the formation of both. And it may not be the conceit of a fanatical imagination, it may be sound and sober rationality—when, after the experience that this is the book whose informations have quelled his fears, and cleared away his perplexities, and lured him to the path of hopeful and progressive virtue, and renovated his whole character, and brought him to peace with God, and poured health and holiness into all the recesses of his moral constitution—it may, indeed, be as valid an argument as ever philosopher has reared on the congruities of the external world, when, looking to the Word and to its manifold congruities with the economy of his own nature, he is riveted into the assurance that verily God is in it of a truth.

34. We may here again observe that the elementary truths of the Gospel are not like many of the truths of human science, in the pursuit of which we are carried onward by the stepping-stones of a long and successive argument. They are brought forth, more in the way of statement than in the way of demonstration. And it is not through a train of reasoning that we gain for them the acceptance of a man's understanding—but more speedily and directly through the manifestation of them



unto the man's conscience. So that if this faculty be asleep, the intimations of the Gospel are unheeded; and it is only when this faculty is awake, and the eye of the inner man is open to its own worthlessness, and sin is seen both in its deformity and its danger—that the tidings of salvation are apprehended to be true, and that, from the felt correspondence which there is between the offered remedy and the spiritual disease. But in order that this correspondence be felt, the disease must be felt—the mind must be so far recovered from its palsy, as to be recovered to a sense and a consciousness which really do not exist among the vast majority of this world's generations. And hence the vanity of all those logical and lengthened processes, which, though all triumphant on that march of investigation by which the studious inquirer is guided to a right conclusion on the questions of philosophy or physics or law, have never availed for the conversion of a human soul to the truth as it is in Jesus. That truth in fact often discovers itself to the mind of an unlettered peasant, on the bare intimation of it. There is a light which makes it manifest to his judgment, that may spring up immediately on the moment of its utterance; and by which too he attains, not a fanciful, but a sound and just and solid apprehension of it. Just grant in his behalf an organ of discernment, so purified of all those obstructions which, in the shape of vain and carnal security, have blinded the perceptions of other men; and he may see himself in the actual characters of guilt and ungodliness which belong to him. And if a man but see his deficiencies, then by a single glance of the eye may he also see, how the doctrines of the Gospel and these deficiencies fit to one another; and thus, by an act of intuition, may a man without learning, but with a conscience simply awakened, be made to perceive what no erudition and no elaborate contemplation of the articles of orthodoxy will make another man to perceive, whose conscience is unawakened. It is somewhat as if a fragment of anything was broken away from some mass of which at one time it formed a part. All the hollows and all the protuberances on the one surface, will be in a state of most accurate adjustment with the corresponding protuberances and hollows upon the other. But it is not by looking, however intently, to one of these surfaces, that we shall come to ascertain the truth of this separation, or, if reunion be possible, the place at which the reunion should be made. It is not by the most strict and scientific measurement of the various angles and unevennesses which have been made at the place of

disruption, if we have only one side of the fracture to look upon. But if we have both sides to compare, the one with the other, we may, with the rapid inspection of a moment, perceive, what the labour of a whole life, expended on the inspection of one side, could not have enabled us to perceive. We may come at once to the belief, that here at one time a part was rent away—and this is the very fragment which has fallen off—and that on the rock from which it was detached, we behold its precise and certain counterpart—a conclusion to which we never should have come by the single contemplation of the precipice that is above us, but to which we come immediately, and as if by the light of intuition, on comparing it with the dissevered piece that is beneath us.

35. There are many high and heavenly things announced to us in the New Testament. And there are earthly things too, such as the hidden things of the heart, for the full disclosure of which the eye of conscience must be opened, that we may perceive how truly it is that the Bible tells us of our wayward and wilful alienation from God—and how righteously therefore He may hold us in the light of everlasting outcasts from the place where His honour dwelleth. It tells us of a great disruption that took place between earth and heaven—and points out the way in which a connexion may again be established between them. We may look to these lofty announcements with the eye of scholarship. We may survey in all its parts and varieties that doctrine which has been brought forward to our view from heaven above—and even delight ourselves with the symmetry and the firm connexion of all its articles. We may weigh the import of every verse by the lexicon; and, looking out on the face of the record, be the most skilled of all the theologians, in the system of truth which it unfolds to us. But that our Christianity should become a matter of home and practical exercise, instead of a matter of distant speculation—or rather, that, beside its doctrinal we may obtain a view of its experimental evidence also, we must look to one side of the disruption as well as to the other of it—and if by the eye of conscience we are made to see ourselves, while by the eye of a simple perusal we see the word of Him who hath spoken to us from heaven—then, as if by the light of immediate revelation, may we be made to recognise, in the adaptation which obtains between unaided nature below and that doctrine which is offered to our contemplation from above, that we indeed have broken loose from God; but that this is the way in which



the old alliance between earth and heaven will again be cemented together. The conviction is imparted by what we see of the celestial part unfolded in the Bible, so tallying with what we know of the terrestrial part that lies in the recesses of our own conscience. This is a conviction which does not wait on the tardy processes of human criticism—and while the laborious commentator has gazed for years upon the record, and never felt the force of its personal application—the simple peasant who knows himself a sinner has found out the adjustments of Scripture with all the moral and spiritual necessities under which he labours—and so, without one ray of guidance from the literature of the schools, does he rejoice in his Bible, and has embraced its promises, and believes and most rationally believes in its truth.

36. It is thus that where there is a sense of guilt, a bare statement may do and do immediately, what, without that sense, cannot be done by the most ingenious and well-sustained demonstration. It is thus that the Gospel often finds a credence and an acceptance, when simply expounded among simple hearers who are practically in earnest, which is vainly attempted by a labouring and ambitious oratory among men whose fancies have been regaled, and whose feelings have been moved, and all whose reasoning faculties have been put on the play of their most congenial exercise while their consciences are in profoundest dormancy. Such men require a stream of argument or the flashes of imagery to keep them awake. The insipidity of a naked statement has no charms for them. Were it the statement of their deliverance from that which they actually dreaded, they would feel an interest—but they have no dread, and therefore it is that they seek for no deliverance. We stand in need of no literary attraction whatever, to secure a welcome admittance for the offer of a discharge from the debt which oppresses us, or of an unfailing cure for the disease under which we labour. But take away our personal interest from such a communication—let the subject of it be a scheme for the liquidation of the national debt, or an argument on the effect and virtues of a medicine—and that our attention may be engaged, there must be the exhibition of proofs and principles and processes of reasoning. It is much in the same way that the doctrine of the atonement may either be argued in the terms of scholarship, or it may be stated in the terms of a simple affirmation. The argument may be listened to and liked by men who feel no personal concern, and therefore make no personal application. The



statement may lodge, and with the power of its own inherent evidence, in the bosoms of men, who see the lineaments of truth in a doctrine, which bears upon it so many traces of correspondence with the needs and the fears and the aspirations of a nature which they know to be undone. And thus it is that faith standeth not in the wisdom of man. That power of demonstration which might make us converts to the philosophy that he expounds, will not make us converts to the Gospel that he preaches. Conversion to the truth as it is in Jesus, does not lie in the understanding being reached by a train of deductions; but it lies in the conscience being reached by the naked assertion of the truth. To go and preach the Gospel is not to go and argue it, but it is to go and proclaim it. The bare proclamation of it has often been followed up by an immediate belief of it—and it may be so still. The mere utterance of what the gospel is, has frequently of itself prompted the firm conviction that the gospel is true. The moment that it was apprehended as to the meaning of it, has it bidden, by the authority of an evidence that was instantly and powerfully felt, an acquiescence in the truth of it. There may be a something in the doctrine without that so responds to the moral constitution within, and this respondency may be so close and so complete in all its adaptations, as to impress, and impress most rationally, the belief of its being a true doctrine. This is the grand engine of Christian proselytism. It is not we think either by wielding the arguments of subtle controversy, or by plying the analogies of skilful and varied illustration, that any effectual conviction is carried. It is by simply promulgating the doctrine, and confiding the acceptance of it to the way in which it meets and is at one with the knowledge that a man has of his own heart, and the sense by which he is touched of his own necessities. He cannot but award his confidence to a statement, which, however unaccompanied it may be with reasoning, reveals to him the intimacies of his own bosom—and thus it is that Christianity commends itself to the acceptance of its disciples, not through the medium of lengthened argument or lofty erudition, but simply through the word brought nigh unto them and the manifestation of its truth unto their conscience.

37. III. The proof on which we are now to enter is more strictly entitled to the appellation of experimental than either of the two former. It differs from these very much as experience differs from observation. We are but engaged in the business of

observation, when attending to the accordancy which sits on the aspect of a professed revelation between what we perceive to be its statements, and what we feel to be the state of our own hearts; and, in particular, when attending to the joint testimony given by conscience and by Scripture to the great moral depravation of our nature. And it is as much a work of observation, when attending to the accordancy which obtains between the offered provisions of the gospel and the felt wants of humanity; or, in particular, when attending to the way in which our natural fears of guilt are met by a remedy of most exquisite skilfulness—so that, while a free channel is opened up for the clemency of God to the most worthless of our kind—still the mercy thus lavished upon the world, instead of undermining that throne whereof justice and judgment are said to be the habitation, is a mercy that serves to vindicate and exalt the whole character and perfections of the Deity. In both these instances we but take an observation. But in the instance now to be given we undergo an experience. An event takes place of which ourselves are the subjects, an event in our own moral and spiritual history—by which, no doubt, a new scene of observation is opened to us; and we become the observers of an evidence that was before hidden from our eyes. But in the event itself there is an evidence, which of all others might well be denominated “experimental”—that event being a change in our mental state which proves in a direct manner the agency of God, and carries in it His attestation to the truth of that Scripture which professes to have come from Him.

38. To understand the nature of this event, we may remark, that long before it has taken place, we may, if not convinced by the verity, at least be impressed by the verisimilitudes of the Christian revelation. The most unlettered peasant, with no other elements than a conscience and a common sense, is capable of being thus impressed. And his attention may be powerfully interested long before his conviction has been gained—or long before he has reached that faith which is unto salvation. For anterior to this, he may feel all the urgencies of fear, and of desire, and of a strong personal interest in a question which involves the favour of God and the fate of eternity. He may long for the repose of settled convictions on the subject; and for this purpose may cast about for a more overpowering light and a more satisfying evidence than any which he has yet found, in the course of his anxious and repeated endeavours

after the solution of his everlasting destiny. It is very conceivable, that, as the Father of his spirit is the great object whom in all this process of desire and of strenuousness he is in quest of, he may, in addition to the perusal of that which claims to be His word, lift the aspirations of his soul towards Him for guidance and aid, in a pursuit which so deeply interests himself. In other words, he may add prayer to those other mental exercises by which he is labouring after the settlement of that question upon which hinges his eternity; and it were interesting to know how the Christianity that results from such a process, instead of a reverie or a fanatical imagination, might be indeed the conviction of a manly and rational and enlightened piety.

39. We have already explained the way in which an answer to prayer may be given—and yet without violence to the operation of any visible and secondary causes\*—how the accomplishment that is wanted may be brought about, not against, but with the use of the ordinary means—how in this way neither a special providence nor the answer to prayer may imply any invasion whatever on the generality or the constancy of Nature's processes: and thus it is, that, if the object of our earnest and persevering entreaty, be a right belief and an adequate knowledge of all that relates to the friendship of God and the well-being of our eternity; the answer may be given, and yet not one sequence connected with the phenomena of the human understanding be at all deranged or intercepted. More particularly, that sequence by which it is that a sound belief comes in the train only of a sufficient evidence, may be most fully and scrupulously observed. And the terminating conviction, instead of some deceitful or visionary glare, may, in fact, be the result of certain manifested proofs, that could both be apprehended by the intellect of the inquirer, and could be alleged and vindicated by him in the hearing of his fellow-men.

40. A miracle is an event that is at variance with the regular and ascertained processes of nature; and the conviction which is thus awarded to an inquirer, in answer to prayer, is not a miracle. It is not borne in upon him like a resistless and indescribable impression. There is not the visitation of a preternatural light, or the whisper of a preternatural voice. It is not given to him like the prophetic inspiration of old—nor is there in it that gleam of illumination, which would almost assimilate the belief of a Christian to the spectral and superstitious fancy

\* See our "Natural Theology," Book V., chap. iii.



of those who take counsel of dreams, and are credulous of apparitions. There is, we are persuaded, an efficacy in the humble prayer for light, of him who has been visited by a moral earnestness to do as he ought and to believe as he ought; but just as the answer of other prayer is accomplished, not against the use of means, but by the use of means—so the belief that issues from the prevailing suit of him who hath mingled his prayers with his perusal of the word, is not a belief that is without the light of evidence, but a belief that is purely and legitimately the effect of it.

41. To be convinced how it is, that one may be made to believe in answer to his prayer, and yet that the belief may be rational and upon evidence—let us only think of the effect, were a tenfold power given to the faculty of sight. Then a whole world of novelties, that had before escaped all notice, might at once be ushered into observation—new objects altogether, and new appearances and shades of colour in objects, that before, in a gross and general way had been quite familiar to us. New convictions of things would instantly spring up in the person who had thus been visited; and, instead of any lack of evidence, it would be evidence at first hand—strong at least as that of ocular demonstration, and impressing a confidence upon the mind as well warranted as that which we repose in the intimations of our senses. There would on this supposition be the revelation of many new facts and new objects; but our belief in their reality would be as distant as possible from a rash or misguided fanaticism. It would be vision with the eye of the body, and not the vagary of a heated imagination at all. Neither would the belief now engendered, be the fruit of any new facts or phenomena, now for the first time brought near to him. It would be solely the fruit of a now clearer and more penetrating inspection, cast by the medicated eye upon old objects. It would be the simple result of a look upon pre-existent nature, but of a look more powerful and perspicuous than we had ever been able to cast upon it before.

42. Now the same renovation that we have just supposed to take place on the eye of the body, may take place on the eye of consciousness—on that eye whose office it is, to look inwardly upon the tablet of the heart, and to take notice of the various characters and lineaments that are thereupon engraven. In virtue of our moral earnestness, and as the fruit of those efforts and of those prayers to which this earnestness hath given rise, some film of pride or of prejudice that had

before obstructed the view of our own character might now be cleared away. We might, in consequence, be now favoured with a reach of discernment that we never before had among the arcana of our own spirit. We see nothing that was not there before; but we see what to us was invisible before. It is to the pre-existent nature within his breast, that he now looks to certain antecedent realities, from which the veil that was formerly upon his heart is now taken away. Let the power of consciousness but be augmented; and there is nought of phantasy whatever in those new truths which now address themselves to the faculty of internal observation. They are not new in respect of existence; they are only new in respect to our knowledge of their existence—recognised by the mental eye now purified and made more powerful than before, and to the reality of which, therefore, we may have in every way as good evidence as we have to the reality of our own thoughts.

43. All this might take place, and as yet there be no evidence evolved in behalf of a professed revelation. But only let us conceive that the same mental eye which can now look with more full and accurate discernment on the internal tablet of the heart, can also look with better discernment than before on the tablet of a written record. Just let us conceive one of its own prayers to be answered—"Open mine eyes to behold the wondrous things contained in the Book of thy law." We do not ask for any revelation of new things. We only ask for the power of a clearer discernment as to the things that are already written. Many of our general readers must be sensible of a certain repulsive obscurity, that overspreads, more especially, the doctrinal pages of the New Testament—a kind of mysterious or hieroglyphical aspect, through the disguises of which they have not yet been able to penetrate—a most singular phraseology, alike remote from the language of common life, and from the language of general literature—a sort of obsolete and exploded nomenclature, that bears upon it the stamp of centuries, as unlike as possible to the phraseology in which those truths are conveyed that command an intellectual homage from the philosophers of this lettered and cultivated age—an impracticable jargon, they may even feel tempted to call it, that is music to the popular ear, and behind which there lie certain recondite doctrines that can only be addressed with effect to the credulity of the vulgar or popular understanding. This is the actual film of prejudice that obstructs the mental eye of many, the most enlightened in science

and in all liberal accomplishments. Now grant but the removal of this film, so that the weight and the significance of such things as are written in Scripture, might become palpable to the eye of the understanding. In its own language, let the understanding be opened to understand the Scriptures; and still there is nothing perceived by the thus clarified eye of the mind, but such matters as were antecedently spread out on the field of this professed revelation. There might be nought of illusion and of imagination in this process; and the only change of which the man is at all conscious in reference to this book, is, that he now apprehends the sense of it—a matter of which he may have just as good title to be confident, as he has when altogether sensible whether he understands or not any of the compositions of ordinary authorship.

44. Now, let us attend to the effect of this simple change. If there be any truth in the first and second of the experimental evidences that we have attempted to explain, it will instantly make them manifest. For the purpose of being impressed by these evidences, there must be a comparison of two tablets—one the inner tablet of the heart, and the other the outer tablet of a professed revelation. If we have no distinct perception of either, then we have not the materials before us on which a comparison can be made. But suppose, that, by our increased faculty of vision, each becomes visible, and then the accordancy between them, if such an accordancy do really obtain, becomes visible also. The one might now stand forth to our newly enlightened discernment as an accurate counterpart of the other. And this perception, coming to us not in the train of any logical process of reasoning, not as the fruit of human argument or human explanation, but simply and directly from the more penetrating consciousness that we now have of our own heart upon the one hand, and from the more powerful intelligence wherewith we now view the positions of the written record upon the other; such a perception arising in this way, after a season perhaps spent in the prayers and the efforts of great moral earnestness, might pass, not merely into a vivid and instantaneous, but also into a most warrantable conviction, that the great and unseen Being who all the while has been the object of our many aspirations: that He whose eye is upon all the characteristics of that microcosm which is within the heart of man, that it was He alone who constructed that volume in which we now behold so minute and marvellous a reflection of it.



45. We must here observe as formerly, that by this process the caprice and the variety of unbridled imagination are altogether precluded. The man who is the subject of it, only sees better than he did before, those permanent and indelible characters that stand out in the written record; and he sees better than before the stable identities of human nature. It is not among allusions, but altogether among realities that he is conversant; and it is out of the comparison between one set of these realities and another that the evidence in question emerges. Out of such a process as this, it is not a fantastic but a sober and intelligible Christianity that is evolved—a Christianity restricted to the things which are written in a now unalterable book; and to those enduring attributes of the heart and of the will, by which abiding and universal humanity is characterized. We believe that in all ages and nations there have been specimens of Christianity formed in this way; and, so far from that interminable and fantastic variety which is apprehended in the process of sentiment that we have now endeavoured to explain, we believe, that the thus originated Christianity of a genuine convert in the farthest outskirts of the species, whether at Greenland or in the Islands of the South Sea, will be found by enlightened observers to be in substantial agreement with each other, and substantially the same with the Christianity of the Archbishop Fénelon, or of the profound and philosophical Pascal.

46. But to satisfy us that at every step the evidence is valid, and that there is no delusion at any one point or turn of the process—let us have recourse to a parallel in nature. We have seen a distant land on the other side of a bay or arm of the sea, stretching along the horizon, and too remote for the observation of its scenery. But the power of vision may be strengthened by a telescope; and they are not allusions surely, but stable and antecedent realities, which we are made by the telescope to perceive. Suppose different individuals to have the advantage of this help to their vision,—still each would behold the same things, and, instead of the phantasmata of an ærial imagination, the eyes of all would rest upon and recognise the very same objects—the actual houses, and spires, and fields, and forests of a landscape that had now for the first time started into sudden, yet sure and satisfactory revelation. But this is not enough to complete the analogy. We know the power of that chemical preparation which receives the name of a sympathetic ink. By it the impression of lines, and characters, and

pictures may be made on paper, but an impression which in the first instance shall be invisible, and shall remain so, till, by the application of a certain chemical agent, it can be made to stand ostensibly out in the proper form and colouring that belong to it. Let this be done on the apparent blank of some tablet which we have in our hand ; and only suppose that what is evolved in consequence, is the accurate representation of that very landscape which the telescope has just disclosed. Let the picture now made manifest for the first time by one agent, be the precise counterpart, in all its features and lineaments, to the distant scene now made manifest by the other ; and the conclusion is irresistible, that he who drew the picture had his eye upon the landscape, or copied from him who had direct and original observation of the scene. The conclusion is truly a sound one ; but not more sound than that of him, who, in virtue of some new power of discernment, can perceive in the book of a professed revelation, an accurate reflection of the character of his own heart—who, a stranger before both to the characters of the outer and to those of the inner tablet, now beholds them standing out in visible manifestation, and can note their perfect correspondency the one to the other. The inference is valid, and such as to stamp entire rationality on the faith of many an unlettered Christian—when he feels how that He who constructed the Bible had preternatural insight into the mysteries of his own spirit—that the Architect of this wondrous volume was no other than the Architect of man's moral economy, and who alone could portray the hidden man of the heart, and bring out to view the secrets of that mechanism which He Himself did frame.

47. Now it may be thought that, by this process, however real, there is nothing gained additional to the first and the second experimental evidence, which we have already endeavoured to expound—that by it we are only made to see the accordancy between the now understood statements of the Bible, and the now felt or perceived state of our own hearts ; and also to see the accordancy between the provisions which are addressed to us there, and those moral or spiritual necessities of which we have now been made sensible : that still we have not advanced any further than to these two kinds of evidence ; nor is it seen immediately, how a third evidence can be founded on that peculiar method by which it is that men are conducted to the former ones.

48. But the truth is, that this peculiar method bears upon

itself another impress of the Divinity. And that, not merely because light hath been made to arise in the mind by a way altogether distinct from any of the processes of human teaching, but also, in the very way that is specified and laid down in the book itself. Being “renewed in knowledge;” being “called out of darkness into marvellous light;” having the “eyes opened to behold;” having the “secrets of the heart made manifest;” being struck with the conviction of inward want and worthlessness on the one hand, and also, on the other, with the efficiency of the proposed application;—these all point to a great event at the outset of a man’s real and decided Christianity: and should the event happen to any individual, there is to him a correspondence between the announcements in the book, and what to himself is a most interesting passage of his own history, which might serve still more to evince the powerful and the presiding intelligence by which it is animated. What it affirms is, not a something which is within us, but a something which will befall us—not, as under the first and implicitly too under the second evidence, not a description of our present state, but the actual prediction or rather fulfilment of a promise in our future history. The divination in fact is heightened into a prophecy. “He that seeketh findeth”—this, if at length verified upon us, and verified in the very peculiar way that we have already explained, will lead us to the view of another coincidence than any which we have yet specified. Not a coincidence between the statements of the book and the state of our own moral economy; not a coincidence between the provisions which it offers and the felt necessities of our actual condition—but a coincidence between what to us is a most interesting prophecy or promise, and the living or actual fulfilment of it in our own persons—a proof most effective individually to ourselves; and which, multiplied as it is in the frequent and unceasing repetitions of it throughout all the countries of Christendom, might furnish a general and enlightened observer with the very strongest materials for the demonstration of the reality of our faith.

49. The event which we now suppose to have taken place in the mental history of an inquirer, supplies him with a great deal more than a mere introduction to the first and second experimental evidences. It is in itself a distinct and additional evidence. There is even more in it than another species of accordancy beside either of those which come under the two former heads of this argument—not an accordancy between what the



Bible says we are, and what we discern ourselves to be ; not an accordancy between what the Bible offers as a remedy, and we feel that we require ; but an accordancy between what the Bible says will happen to its disciples, and what they experience in themselves to happen actually. But over and above this, we behold, in this great spiritual transaction, the characters, not merely of the Divine prescience, but of the Divine agency. For it comes as the fulfilment of a promise, and in answer to prayer ; and so gives the irresistible conviction, that the power, and the will, and the knowledge, and the faithfulness of the living God are all concerned in it. It bears every mark of a special interposition on the part of Him who "commands the light to shine out of darkness," who hath promised to "draw near unto those who draw near unto him," and tells the sinner who awakens at His call that "Christ shall give him light." And yet special though the interposition be, if by a miracle we mean a contravention to some known sequence or law of nature, it stands distinguished from an ordinary miracle. The change is too far back for being a miraculous one, in the commonly understood sense of that term.\* It takes place, not among the known processes of the intellect, but in the powers of the intellect—at the margin of separation between the known and the unknown, if not behind it. We are made conscious, by this mental change, of brighter perceptions than before ; but all our trains of perception and reasoning proceed in their wonted order ; and our faculties, now gifted with a clearer discernment of Scripture than before, are nevertheless similarly exercised in the study of this book to what they are in the study of all human authorship. If by a miracle be meant that by which a different consequent emerges from the same antecedent as before—then we have not the means of detecting a full miracle in that gracious change, by which transition is made from the darkness of nature to the light of the gospel. For the change takes place on the first or remotest term of the progression that is visible to us. With the senses of the mind made clearer ; and our first perceptions, whether of the Bible or of ourselves, more luminous than before, we may be said to start from new antecedents—while after this, all the mental phenomena, observable by us, strictly conform to the laws of the mental philosophy. Neither is there any new creation of objective light, for the purpose of making the convert see. The change is an organic one on his seeing faculties ; or

\* See "Natural Theology," Book V. Chap. iii. Art. 28.

rather, the removal of an obstruction which prevents its ingress into the soul. God, in this work of illumination, does not command the light to exist; but He commands the light, the pre-existent light, to shine out of darkness, or to shine through the veil by which it was before intercepted.

50. But he who is the subject of this visitation may be altogether unable to philosophize on the grounds of that conviction in which it has issued, or on the steps by which he has been led to it. The conviction, however, is not the less clear or warrantable on that account.\* He who has thus been made to see, sees upon evidence as sound as to himself it is satisfactory; and could we by any means be made to know what passes in the minds of others, as intimately as we know and feel what passes in our own minds—we might, from the history of every manifestation, gather a strong argument, of a peculiar but very conclusive kind, for the truth of Christianity. Such a general observation as this, however, were not very practicable; and therefore it is the more fortunate, that this evidence, which it were so difficult to collect from the history of others, gathers in brightness every day along the line of the individual history of each real Christian. And this experimental evidence is perpetually growing. There is not merely an agreement between the declarations of the book and his own experience, in the great event that marks and that constitutes in fact the outset of that new moral career upon which he has entered; but there is a sustained agreement between its declarations, and the evolutions of his mental or spiritual history in all time coming. There is a busy interchange of correspondence and of mutual confirmation going on, between what he finds and what it says. There is thus a growing confidence that he attaches to this book—just as he would attach a growing confidence to the prophet who had adventured himself on the futurities of his own personal story; and, in favour of whom, every new day of his life had brought round some accomplishment or other. And so it is, that even the unlettered peasant may receive an impression of the truth of this book, from the truth of its manifold agreements with his own intimate experience. He may recognise throughout its pages, not merely the shrewd discernment of what he is, but the prophetic discernment of what he will be along the successive stages of his preparation for heaven. And, with every new experience

\* See, in Book I., the distinction made by us between the direct process, and the reflex view that might be taken of it in the act of reasoning.

of the way in which its descriptions tally with the details of his own history—as in the account, for example, that it gives of the exercises of the spirit, whether under the afflictions of life or the assaults of temptation—or in the fulfilments of prayer—or in the facilities that open up, for a still more prosperous cultivation of the heart, along the path of an advancing excellence—or in the light which it casts over the ways and the arrangements of Providence in the world—there redounds from all these, and from many more which cannot be specified, the glory of an increasing evidence for the truth of that volume whose insight not only reaches to the penetralia of the human character, but lays open the secrets and the dark places that lie in the womb of futurity. This is truly an accumulating evidence. It brightens with every new fulfilment, and every new step in the journey of a Christian's life; and, amid the incredulity and derision of those who have no sympathy either with his convictions or his hopes—still we hold that the faith, thus originated and thus sustained, is the faith not of fanaticism but of sound philosophy; that his experimental Christianity rests, in fact, on a basis as firm as experimental science; that there is neither delusion in the growing lustre of his convictions through life, nor delusion in the concluding triumphs and ecstasy of his deathbed.

51. In these various ways, then, might Christianity manifest its own truth to the conscience of every man. When making demonstration of human guilt, there might be such an accordancy with all that nature felt of its own guiltiness—when making demonstration of the offered atonement, there might be such an accordancy with all that nature felt of its own necessities, as first to draw the attention, and then to compel the belief of all who were thus arrested. The felt force of the disease on the one hand, and the felt suitableness of the remedy on the other, might land them, and rightfully land them, in such a consummation. It is not that, viewed as two naked propositions, they can evince or establish the general truth of the system which contains them. But they are variously and repeatedly set forth in the sacred record; and this gives rise to innumerable touches of descriptive accuracy, to a multiple and sustained harmony between the inward tablet of the heart and the outward tablet of a professed revelation. There is an evidence afforded by the agreement between a complex tally and its alike complex but accurately resembling counterpart; and there may be a like evidence in the countless adaptations which obtain between a supernal applica-



tion from heaven, and the human nature beneath, upon which it has descended. And beside these, there are so many other symptoms or signatures of truth which the conscience can lay hold of. It can discern the apparent honesty of any communication. It can take cognizance of all that marks the worth or the simplicity of its bearers. It can feel and be impressed by its aspect of undoubted sacredness. It can distinguish the voice of a God, or of an ambassador from God, in its promulgation of a righteous law, and in the sustained dignity and effect wherewith it challenges a rightful authority. It can perceive all which is in and about the message to be in keeping with the high original which it claims; and, whether it looks to the profoundness of its wisdom or to the august and inviolable purity of its moral character, it can perceive when these evidences are so enhanced and multiplied on a professed embassy from heaven, as to announce its descent from a God of knowledge and a God of holiness.

52. We may now understand what is meant by the self-evidencing power of the Bible. It is that in virtue of which it announces its own authority to the understanding of the reader. It is not only the bearer of its own contents, but is the bearer also of its own credentials. It is by the external and historical evidences of Christianity that we are enabled to maintain its cause against the infidelity of lettered and academic men. But it is another evidence that recommends it to the acceptance of the general population. Their belief in Scripture, and we think all saving belief whatever, is grounded on the instant manifestation of its truth unto the conscience. And thus, without the aid of sensible miracles in the present age, and without even the scholarship which ascertains and verifies the miracles of a past age, do we hold that the divinity of the Bible may be read and recognised in its own pages, and that in virtue of an evidence which might be addressed with effect to the moral nature of man in any quarter of the world.

53. But what gives complete and conclusive effect to this evidence is the revelation of the Spirit. For the understanding of this there is one thing of prime importance to be attended to. The Spirit, when He acts as an enlightener, presents us with no new revelation of His own. He only shines on that revelation which is already given in the Bible. He brings no new truths from afar, He but discloses the truths of that word which is nigh unto us. It is true that He opens our eyes; but it is to behold the

wondrous things contained in this book. It is true that He lifts up a veil; but it is not the veil which hides from our view the secrets of any distant or mysterious region. He taketh away the veil from our hearts, and we, made to behold that which is within, and also to behold that which is without—become alive to the force and fulness of that evidence which lies in the manifold adjustments between them—convinced at once of the magnitude of our own sin, and of the suitableness and reality of the offered salvation. In this process there is no direct announcement made to us by the Spirit of God. There is neither a voice nor a vision; no whisper to the ear of the inner man—no gleam either of a sensible or spiritual representation. There is light, it is true, shining out of darkness; but it is the light of the Bible, now made luminous, reflected from the tablet of conscience, now made visible. It is not a light shining direct upon us from the heavenly objects themselves; but it is a light shining on a medium of proof by which we are made sensible of their reality. He who has been visited by this manifestation can say, I was blind, but now I see. He may remember the day when a darkness inscrutable seemed to hang over those mystic—those then unmeaning passages of the Bible, which he now perceives to be full of weight and full of significancy. He may remember the day when, safe and satisfied with himself, he neither saw the extent and the purity of God's lofty commandment, nor his own distance and deficiency therefrom—though now, burdened with the conscious magnitude of his guilt, he both sees the need of a Saviour, and feels His preciousness. He is now brought within full view of the argument that we have laboured to unfold; and the transition, the personal or the historical transition, which himself has undergone, is to his own mind a most impressive argument. It forms to him an experimental evidence of the truth of Christianity—and may be regarded as another appeal to his conscience or to his consciousness in its favour. He has become a Christian in the true sense and significancy of the term. The gospel hath entered his mind in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. He rejoices in the hope of its bright fulfilments; and, untutored though he be in the scholarship of its literary or argumentative evidences, he, though of humble education and humble circumstances, can give a reason of his hope.

54. It should not be difficult to understand, how, under this process of spiritual illumination; men, in all ages or parts of the world, the most widely distant from each other, are nevertheless

introduced to one and the same Christianity. The Spirit does not make known a different religion to each ; but He manifests the same great truths to every understanding—the stable characteristics of human nature, and the no less stable doctrines of revelation, fixed and handed down to us in an imperishable written record. This will explain the mutual recognitions, the felt affinities, the perfect community of soul and sentiment that obtain between the truly regenerated of all countries and all periods. A Christian peasant of Scotland, were the barrier of their diverse language removed, could enter into fullest sympathy into the feelings, and the views, and the mental exercises of a Christianized Hottentot in South Africa. On the same principle, he would feel the consent of a common intelligence and common sensibility with his author—when reading the pages of Augustine, or any other writer on practical Christianity, who, like him, underwent a transition from the darkness of nature to the marvellous light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Were the materials for the observation within our reach, it were most interesting to compare the converse between two devoted Christians brought together from the remotest places of the earth, and that, for example, of a Mahometan Moor with a Mahometan Persian—the first two having the Bible as a common subject of reference ; the second two the Alcoran. Each would sympathize with the other of his own kind ; but a mighty lesson might be educed from the extent and the character of their respective sympathies. In the one, we should behold a community of the same ablutions, the same abstinences, the same external observations. In the other, we should behold a community of a far higher kind—of soul with soul ; a coalescence between the thoughts, and affections, and principles of the inner man. The votaries of other religions may have one baptism. They are the votaries of the Christian religion alone who have one Lord, that dwells in them and makes them one both with Himself and with each other ; one faith, that, working by love, has the entire mastery over both their intellectual and their moral nature—and, subordinating the whole heart and history to the same great principle, begets that likeness or identity between all the members, however scattered, of Christ's spiritual family, which is expressed in our theological systems by the communion of the saints. They are bound together by the tie of their common sympathies and their common hopes ; and, in the topics of converse suggested by these, they have an interest which never fails.



## CHAPTER IV.

ON THE PORTABLE CHARACTER OF THE EVIDENCE FOR THE TRUTH OF  
CHRISTIANITY.

1. THE epithet of *portable*, though alike applicable to the moral, the experimental, and the doctrinal evidence for the truth of Christianity, we should not have ventured to adopt in this place, had it not been previously sanctioned by our admirable friend, Joseph John Gurney,\* whose writings have contributed so much to the defence and illustration of our common faith.

2. The meaning of it is, that, unlike to the historical or literary evidence, which, as requiring a higher amount of scholarship and education than is found to obtain throughout the general mass of society, can only be addressed to a limited class of readers—the portable evidence, on the contrary, may be borne to every door, and find an opening for itself to the heart and the conscience even of the most unlettered of our species. Yet it is not by a reflex or philosophical exposition of this evidence—it is not by such an exposition of it as we have attempted to give in the two previous chapters, that it is made to obtain an entrance into the minds of the common people. It works a way for itself there, and there achieves its main triumphs through the direct preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is while the minister unfolds the contents of the Christian message, though without one word from him on the credentials of the message, that the best and weightiest of these credentials do of themselves find access to the popular understanding. It is thus that the subject-matter of Christianity, instinct in itself with evidence, may, when simply told and explained, be left to vindicate its own authority; and does in fact carry its own proper weight, amounting to absolute and entire ascendancy, over the convictions of the most ignorant and unlearned hearers. And this mental consent of theirs is not fancy but faith—the real substance of belief, and not the semblance of it only—the result of a process as legitimate and as logical as any of those by which philosophy has been led to her soundest conclusions—a belief resting upon evidence presented in the message, though not pointed to or once named to them by the bearer of the message—an evidence

\* See his interesting little work on the “Portable Evidence of Christianity.”

recognised by the people, though perhaps never reasoned on by the minister.

3. And this self-evidence which lies in the matter of revelation and makes it so applicable to the unlearned within, makes it equally applicable to the rudest and most unlettered tribes without the limits of Christendom. In the power and effect of the internal evidence, we behold the rationale of a missionary enterprise—the agents of which, with but the Bible in their hands, and the spirit of prayer in their hearts, are in a state of full equipment for operating on the moral nature of man in every quarter of the globe. They are in possession of a key to all consciences; and, without the power either of working present miracles or of demonstrating to the apprehension of savages the certainty of past miracles, they nevertheless are in possession of vouchers to authenticate their mission, and by which to make full proof of their apostleship.

4. Before expatiating further either on the one or the other application, the evidence itself may again be shortly stated, even that evidence by which the messengers of the gospel might pioneer an access for Christianity to the consciences of the men of the whole earth—whether to the most sunken in the depths of ignorance and poverty at home—or to the furthest removed in the wilds of distant and yet unexplored barbarism.

5. Each entire man has a conscience within his breast which tells him of the difference between right and wrong, and tells him somewhat of the God who planted it there; and each has a consciousness which tells him of his own delinquencies against this law of moral nature, and that, in the eye of Him who ordained that law, he himself is an offender. Let the word which tells him the same things lay hold of his attention, and the recognised harmony between the lessons of the one and of the other—the felt echo in his own heart to the intimations of a message thus brought nigh unto him—the response given from within to the voice heard from without—will fix and perpetuate his attention the more; and all the discoveries made by this process of a joint or double manifestation, will have, at least, the authority of two witnesses to confirm them. Let us conceive that the ministrations of the Spirit are superadded to the ministrations of the word, and that he who is the subject of these, obtains, in consequence, a clearer and fuller view both of himself and of the Bible. Under such a discipline as this, all his convictions, and with his convictions, his fears, must grow apace; the feeble and

incipient notices which first drew his regards, might now be to him the loud denunciations of terror ; all that is said of the evil of sin, and of the vengeance which awaits the sinner under a holy and unchangeable lawgiver, might have tenfold greater weight and significancy than before ; and he be haunted in consequence, by the thought of an angry God and an undone eternity. In the midst of these disquietudes which so agitate and engross his soul, let us further imagine that the same Bible which told him of sin, now tells him of salvation ; and that the same Spirit from on high which irradiated the one revelation and made it stand forth as if in illuminated characters of greater dread and majesty than before, casts a bright but pleasing irradiation over the other also. In answer to the prayers of this tossed and tempest-driven suppliant, seeking for rest, but hitherto finding none, let the revelation of grace be at length made as palpable as before was the revelation of terror. Let him now be helped to take a view of redemption, in its characters and in its footsteps—of that great movement made from heaven to earth, and the object of which was to reconcile the outcast world and recall its wandering generations to the family of God. Let the law have acted its part as a schoolmaster in bringing him to Christ ; and, in the history of Him who came, charged with the overtures of peace, and went about doing good continually, let him learn the possibility at least that there is an outlet of escape from condemnation—that there is still a refuge from despair. Let this dawning hope ripen more and more towards a full assurance, as he becomes more intelligent in the doctrines of the Saviour, and listens to His repeated declarations of good will to the children of men. Above all, let him be made to know the purposes of His death ; and his mind be opened to behold the great mystery of the atonement, the union of heaven's justice with heaven's clemency. It is then that the scales fall from his eyes ; and in the propitiated pardon of the gospel, blending the honours of a vindicated sacredness with the freest and fullest proclamations of mercy, he at length finds that alone remedy by which the misgivings of his guilty nature can be met and satisfied. By one and the same manifestation, even the spectacle of the Cross, his confidence, though a transgressor of the law, is restored ; while his reverence for the law's authority is exalted—and, in the transition which he now makes to peace and holiness, he learns what it is to mix trembling with his mirth, to combine with the security of the Christian faith the diligence of the Christian practice.



But his experience does not stop at this great event of his history, which might well be termed the turning-point of his salvation. It rather only begins here; and, along the career of the new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord, with the power of sin broken, and a constantly increasing delight in that law which was formerly his terror, the descriptions of the book so tally with the findings of his own heart and his own history, as to multiply the evidence upon him that Christianity is divine. Under the teaching of the Bible which he daily reads, and of the Spirit which he daily prays for, these signatures of heaven in the whole religion of the New Testament become every day more legible and more convincing—till a belief, never to be shaken, be fully established within him, that verily God is in it of a truth.

6. Now throughout the whole of this schooling, we never once come into converse with the historical or the literary evidence for the truth of the gospel. The aids of a critical and controversial authorship, with its scientific apparatus of polyglotts, and grammars, and lexicons, are never called for. These mysteries of a higher scholarship are beyond the reach of our common people—who yet, with no other apparatus than that of a Bible and of a conscience, are capable of being introduced to the mysteries of a still surer and more satisfying revelation. There is a process by which the things that are hidden from the wise and the prudent might be abundantly made known to the veriest babes in the learning of this world. Let them have but Bibles in their hands, and consciences in their bosoms—then, with that power from on high which operates on these and is given to our prayers, we are in possession of the adequate means for the saving illumination even of the humblest and homeliest of men. In other words, without either the gift of miracles or of profound erudition or philosophy, we might be in a state of full equipment for the Christianization of the world.

7. There is a twofold application that might be made of this subject. First, the encouragement derived from it to efforts in behalf of the education of our own countrymen—secondly, the like encouragement to efforts for the civilisation of the nations beyond the limits of Christendom. The philosophy of missions in their two great branches, the Home and the Foreign, receives its best vindication on the ground of the self-evidencing power of the Bible—as portable, therefore, as the truths of the Bible are portable; and we hope it will not be deemed an unreason-

able digression if, at this stage of our argument, we now advert to the likelihoods of both.

8.—1. In the gospel then there is a sure testimony, “making wise the simple”—the line whereof goeth out “through all the earth,” and its “words to the end of the world.”\* This diffusive property signifies more than the property of stretching to a far distance. To overspread implies a filling up, as well as an expansion. That Christianity go completely through all the earth, it must not only be carried forth to its remotest extremities—there must be no intermediate vacancies left, else the knowledge of the Lord does not cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. For a thorough fulfilment of missionary work, we must not only expand, we must also pervade. The object is not merely to enlarge the borders of Christendom; it is to reclaim the interior wastes of Christendom itself—and, for this purpose, we must visit the desolate places that are within as well as those that are without the territory. When we hear of a missionary enterprise, our thoughts would carry us afar to the remotest isles of Paganism, or to those vast and yet unexplored continents which have not been penetrated by the light of revelation. It is not recollected, that, beside these unvisited regions at a distance, and still under the shadow of death, we have unassailed fastnesses at home—whole masses of irreligion and deepest spiritual apathy, whether in the putrid lanes of our cities or in the remote hamlets and villages of our country parishes—thousands of imperishable spirits of men living at our own doors, who personally are within the sight of churches, and the hearing of church-bells, yet morally are at as great a distance, not from the spirit and power only, but from the knowledge of the gospel, as if they had been born and lived all their days in the wilds of Tartary. In the splendour of the distant enterprise, we are apt to overlook these; and, with imaginations fired by the project of an attack on the primeval seats of idolatry in other countries and other climes, the claims of our own kindred and our own countrymen are apt to be forgotten.

9. Now, when we speak of the portable evidence of Christianity, we mean that evidence by which it can reach the consciences and the conduct even of the unlettered multitude. We distinguish it from that other evidence, the understanding of which requires a science and a scholarship that are confined to the few. It is that in virtue of which we are placed in circum-

\* Psalm xix. 4.

stances for addressing with effect the hitherto most untutored of our own population, though sunk in deepest ignorance—as well as those rudest of nature's children, those wanderers of the desert, where the sound of the gospel was never heard. All men have in them the common faculty of a conscience that suggests the same notions of right and wrong—the same sense of their moral want and their moral worthlessness to all. And Christianity has in it the property of an adaptation to the conscience by which it might commend itself to all, and so find proselytes for itself in every quarter of the globe—it is this self-evidencing power of the Bible which makes its doctrines portable to every understanding, and its lessons portable to every heart. And it not only explains the full and final entrance of Christianity into the mind, when, in the moment of conversion it is at last admitted as the settled belief of the inquirer—it also explains the welcome of its first approaches; for the same characteristics of this religion which seen fully at the last secure for it the full conviction of the mind, though seen but dimly at the first, give it a certain creditable aspect even at the outset—so that, though not received all at once, it may still be entertained even at the very first; and we have no doubt that this operates most powerfully, as an ingredient in that facility of access, which the bearers of Christianity experience, when, passing from house to house, they make offer of their Christian services, and announce the errand on which they have come, of doing all which they can and are permitted to do, for the moral and Christian good of the families.

10. And accordingly, what is the experience of those who make this attempt—who go forth among the households of the poorer classes, not with the offer of silver and gold, for of such they may have none, but with the offer of their devotions through the week, and of their Christian advice upon the Sabbath—whose only errand is as the messengers of Christianity—the bearers of its comfort to their sick and dying, of its lessons whether of warning or encouragement to themselves and to their children? The pleasing discovery, of which every day is now multiplying the instances, is, that, with the exception perhaps of not one in a hundred, the religious philanthropist finds a cordial admittance at every door—that, generally and almost universally, there is a welcome and a good-will attendant upon his footsteps, a grateful response to the overtures wherewith he is charged; and, though he comes in what might be held a somewhat invidious



capacity, as a reformer of their habits and a reformer of their lives, that nevertheless he makes good his entry, not into their habitations only, but into their hearts; and that, if he but concentrate his attentions on a territory small enough for becoming the acquaintance of all the families, he will earn, as the fruit of his moral and benevolent assiduities, the confidence and the affection of all. We do not say that he will gain over the convictions of all, but, by dint of his fidelity and honest friendship in the midst of them, he will very nearly gain over the kindness of all. He may not secure a full acceptance for Christianity. But to a great extent he will secure at least a hearing for it. Such at least is the common finding of those who have attempted, in a sustained way, to make a lodgment for the ministrations of the gospel in the churchless villages and before unentered city recesses of our own land—teeming with unknown and hitherto neglected myriads of immortal creatures, among whom Christianity has been suffered to wane into extinction; but who, nevertheless, have still the human feelings and the human consciences by which to find a way to them. There is a natural cordiality almost with all, in virtue of which the bearers of the truth are welcomed, when, in the prosecution of this their moral and benevolent enterprise, they make their descent upon the families.\* But this alone would not suffice, but for that credibility in the truth itself, which introduces it first to the attention, and then wins for it the full and final acceptance of the mind; and to meet this, there is a natural conscience in all, which, made awake and intelligent by the Spirit of God, can take knowledge of the word that is spoken, and do homage to the Divinity which is therein manifested. Both these, the natural cordiality and the natural conscience, may be regarded as parts of human nature by which provision is made for the access of Christianity to the people; or, by which Christianity is rendered so portable—both throughout the habitations, and into the hearts of men. The conjunction of these two forms a mighty encouragement to all missionary work. It is with the second of these that the consideration of the internal evidence has properly

\* We speak of Scotland. We have not had much experience of the people or towns in England; but there is certainly a more general impression in that part of the island, that, to secure a general welcome among the families of the working classes, the offered services of Christianity must be accompanied with the gifts of ordinary kindness. We apprehend that there is a fatal incongruity between these two ministrations; and that every scheme for the Christian education of the people, should stand dis severed from all ostensible measures for the relief of poverty.

to do. But the first, as not having been much adverted to, is what at present we shall most dwell upon, as furnishing the most important facility to the great enterprise, if not of carrying Christianity abroad among the distant wilds of paganism, at least of obtaining entry for it among the families of our own population. It is a glorious achievement to plant the gospel in other lands. But, if reckoned less glorious, it is surely not less useful to fill up the blanks and lighten the dark places of our home territory.

11. There is a barrier at the outset of the foreign which does not obtain in the home enterprise. In the former we go forth as bearers of a hostile religion. We come into conflict with the prejudices of a hereditary faith. We encounter the hazard of impassioned resistance, often of personal violence. In the latter we experience the reverse of all this. We go forth among the people, not to root out a hostile but to revive a decayed religion—transmitted to them from their fathers; and which, though extinct in power, is not unknown to them by name, and is in harmony with all their remaining associations of sacredness, however feeble or almost forgotten these might be. It is thus that, in the very first movements from house to house of the home-missionary, there is often a certain reverential feeling awakened; and, at all events, as kindness is the moving principle of the operation, there is throughout a very general sense of that kindness, that is both warmly felt and gratefully acknowledged, and which secures, not a decent only but a welcome reception to our adventurer on this new walk of benevolence. At the very least, encouragement enough is given and a way is sufficiently opened for announcing his errand to them as their Christian friend or Christian adviser, who will preach in their immediate neighbourhood on the Sabbath, and is willing to render through the week all those attentions and services of which they may choose to avail themselves. There is often a promise to attend on the public, and still oftener an invitation to repeat the personal visit—and so the profession of a willingness to accept of the private or the household ministrations. If this process be steadily persevered in, if to these stated movements oft repeated among the people, there be added a frequent occasional movement, whenever the call of sickness, or of death, or of any sort of family distress shall have opened the hearts and the houses of the afflicted to the entry of Christian kindness—the result of these assiduities through the week, is the gradual building up of a congregation on the Sabbath. The people even of the most

outlandish district, in places the most destitute and depraved, may thus be gathered into a parochial family, and trained to parochial habits. Children, of all others, may be made to participate most largely in this improvement. Under the moral ascendancy of the pastor, who has assumed their territory for his vineyard, and earned, as the fruit of his daily and weekly labours, the confidence and attachment of the people, education will grow apace among them. Even by the time when only perhaps a few are converted, many will be at least humanised—for such is the savour of Christianity, that, over and above its own proper influence on the individuals whom it sanctifies, it has a secondary and wide-spread influence over the community, whose standard of morals it exalts, and whose general habits it refines and civilizes. Altogether, with the power of that kindness which the messengers of Christianity might bring to bear upon human feelings, and the power of Christianity itself over human consciences, there never was so effective an instrument as the one which we now describe, for reclaiming men from what might appear even the most hopeless and impracticable degeneracy. For the latter power, Christianity stands indebted to its own evidence, to the aspect of likelihood which it wears even at the first, and its perpetually growing claims on the attention and moral earnestness of every inquirer—till at length the conclusive revelation is made to him of such credentials as satisfy his mind that the religion is true. For the former power it is indebted to that peculiarity in the human constitution by which it is that the manifested good-will of one man tells so immediately and with such subduing effect on the heart of another man. As a pioneer or a precursor to the ministrations of the gospel, this principle is invaluable—though till of late but scarcely adverted to; and far too little use has been made of it. It of itself forms no part of the evidence for the truth of the Christian religion; but it is the avenue by which the portable evidence of Christianity finds its way to the population—not that which carries the belief, but that which gains the attention that precedes the belief—not the proof, but the means for the conveyance of it.

12. Hitherto we have not enough availed ourselves of those strong affinities which bind one man to another, and extend the brotherhood of our nature far beyond the limits of kindred or previous acquaintanceship. It may be experienced on the moment of our entrance within the threshold of a family which we



never before saw. The character of the reception is almost invariable—that of genuine and entire cordiality. The errand on which we go announces itself to be one of kindness; and, in almost every instance, it calls forth the sense and the spirit of kindness back again. By the very act of coming under the roof of one of the common people, we in a manner throw ourselves upon his kindness; and scarcely ever, in one instance, does this confidence deceive us. Insomuch that we have often felt as if to enter the house of a poor man or a labourer was the readiest method of finding our way into his heart. Certain it is that nothing can be more companionable, and if not courtly at least courteous which is far better—nothing can be more polite in the best sense of the term, for it is nature's politeness under the spontaneous impulse of nature's honesty, than that which is habitually experienced in these rounds of pastoral or missionary visitation. If we want to taste the amenities of human intercourse, let us go, not in the capacity of an almoner but in the higher capacity of a Christian philanthropist, either to the country hamlet or to the city lane—let us carry our proffers of beneficence either to the peasant in the one situation or to the man of handicraft and hard labour in the other—let it be the prospect of a Christian benefit to themselves, or of an educational benefit to their children—we do not say that the consent will be gotten all at once to the practical arrangement whatever it may be; but, from the very first, both the visit and the object of it will be well taken; and such is the charm of these household attentions, that a great and effectual door is opened by them to all those results, which the manifested friendship and the moral suasion of one man have power to effectuate in the purposes and the doings of another.

13. We can well imagine here a certain suspicion or incredulity, as if our picture was over-coloured—or as if there was more of the imaginative than of the experimental in our representation. But our shrewd and sceptical antagonists do truly confound the things which differ, when they liken these everyday findings with which we now deal to the visions of Arcadia. Those cordialities of human intercourse, and the results which come out of them, have nought in them whatever of the romance or the extravagance of poetry. What Howard, on the walk of general benevolence, realized in prisons, any other, if he is but a man of heart and genuine piety, will realize in parishes. Those triumphs of kindness which the one achieved in the

malefactor's cell, the other will with still greater facility achieve in the ploughman's cabin and the workman's lowliest tenement. If the moral desperadoes of a jail can be made to own the omnipotence of charity, it surely will not be more difficult to earn the same ascendancy over the commonplace men and women of our general population. It is true that, even among these, individuals are to be found, who, though not yet convicted of crime, have all the hardihood and all that aspect of stout and resolute defiance which belong to criminals—whose hearts are hearts of steel—whose houses are houses of riot, intemperance, and shame. Yet even they, it is often found, might be melted into a sort of grateful reverence, and that on the first apostolic entry ever made within their doors; and what might be deemed singular yet is really not so, though sheathed in hopeless obduracy themselves, so that their own reformation is by all despaired of, yet there is enough of remaining conscience and human affection within them, to make them seize on the proposal of meetings, and sermons, and Sabbath-schools for their children. But more, though at the outset house and heart should both be barricaded against the approaches of Christian benevolence, neither yet must all prospect of good, even in these cases of rare and monstrous exception to the general law of our nature, be given up as conclusively at an end. The determined agent of this benevolence is on the highest of all vantage-ground. He has only to keep his post and to watch his opportunity. Events will work for him. Providence will at length open a door for him. Calamity, or sickness, or death will in the course of months or years break in upon the household of this family of aliens—when our resolved visitant of mercy will be no longer scowled upon, and the sound of his footsteps will be welcome to their ears. His presence will solemnize them. His prayers will soften them. His sympathies and well-timed services will awaken the humanity that has long been dormant but not extinguished within them. Even their gratitude, all ungainly as they are, will be found not beyond the power and the perseverance of charity like his; and if theirs, he may be sure of a general if not a universal conquest over the affections of his whole territory. We do not say that he will convert all; but nearly, he will humanize all. We do not say that, even at the end of a period of years, he will have gotten all or even many to believe. But he will have gotten very many to attend. He may not have lodged in the heart of each the truth which is

unto salvation ; but he will at least have congregated a goodly number within reach of the hearing of it. And, even at this early stage of his proceedings, though he may have only established the footsteps of a few in the way of life—he may have raised the standard of civility and morals throughout the general multitude. Though preparing the way for it, he may yet be far short of having consummated the object of the Christian. Yet already, in the service of having formed a humanized and orderly population, he may have fulfilled the great object of the statesman and the patriot.

14. So important is this process, that one cannot be at too great pains in explaining the essential steps of it. And the most essential, for recalling a population who have degenerated, is a system of week-day attentions within the limits of a district, small enough to insure their sufficient frequency, and to make an acquaintance possible with one and all of the families. A church, not so related to a given territory, but meets the demand which already exists for the lessons of the gospel—drawing within its precincts the attendance of those who have lost the habits and observations of a Christian land, and amongst whom the sense of religion is in a great measure extinguished. It is not by any spontaneous movement of theirs, that the wished for condition will be accomplished. The movement must begin at the opposite quarter, with the dispensers of Christianity and not with its recipients—not on the part of men seeking after the gospel of Jesus Christ, but on the part of men who go forth charged with its overtures and press them on the attention and acceptance of others. Had the world been left to itself, it would have settled or sunk still farther in the midst of its own degeneracy, and made no aspirations after God ; and so a movement had to be made, not from earth to heaven, but from heaven to earth—when Christianity made its first ingress among men. Even after it was made known to a few in Judea, had the surrounding nations been left to themselves, they would still have persisted for ever in the darkness and the depths of their idolatry ; and so a movement was called for, not from the nations to Jerusalem—but, the other way, from Jerusalem to the nations ; and the order of procedure was, to go and preach the gospel to every creature, beginning from Jerusalem. And still, after Christianity has thus been planted in any land, it must not lay aside its missionary character—but keep by it still, for its own further and fuller diffusion. For let the people of any locality be left to



themselves; and they will lapse into irreligion, be it in the neglected outfields of a country or in the neglected streets of a city population; and still, whether to re-establish Christianity or to sustain it, the movement must be made not from them but to them. Nature has no appetency for that bread of life which came down from heaven; and which, after it has so come, must still be carried forth throughout the earth—and that, not from country to country only, but from house to house, so as to attempt a lodgment within every heart, and to knock at the door of every habitation. It is not only true in reference to the people of other regions and of distant climes—how can they believe except men be sent to them? It is true in reference to the people of other streets, and at the distance of but a few steps from us—how can they believe except men be sent to them? Each parish church of a religious establishment should be a missionary station, or the centre of a missionary process that bears on all the houses of its definite and assigned vicinity. And so of every new church, every distinct and additional edifice that is raised for the services of the gospel—it will lose its efficiency as a further propagator of that gospel in the land, unless it assumes a missionary character and enters on a missionary operation. Instead of waiting to be filled by a movement from without, it should itself originate the movement, and best, if possible, when among the families in a state of immediate juxtaposition around it—holding out all facilities for their attendance, and exciting to the uttermost their demand or their desire for Christianity, by presenting it to their notice, and bringing if possible its urgencies and its awakening calls within reach of their consciences. It is thus that each may reclaim its own district; may take possession and cultivate its own little territory; and, by the ligament which binds together the week-day attentions of the minister on the one hand, and the Sabbath attendance of the people on the other, may gather into adjacent parochial communities those immense city multitudes, whose amelioration in the bulk looks so chimerically hopeless, but in detail and by fragments or sections, is really so practicable. We know of no other instrumentality by which this greatest of all problems can be resolved. It is only by a separate operation on each district, and then the apposition of one district to another—it is only thus, we apprehend, that, as by the apposition of farm to farm, a moral fertility can be made to overspread a whole territory, or a whole country be reclaimed.

15. How then is it that philanthropists and patriots, those who have the amelioration of humanity constantly in their mouths, nay, perhaps, are honestly intent on it, how is it that they so little avail themselves of this patent and practicable way? There is not a fonder speculation of theirs, than the likeliest method by which to regenerate society—to regenerate the world. We can imagine no other method of doing it than to do it piecemeal; or to do it in parcels. But like all those who say much and do nothing, they seem to be dreaming of some expedient or other by which to do it in bulk—so that, all at once, and on the back of their yet undisclosed, and we may add, yet undiscovered specific, the human species might instantly start into a moralized and happy family. They are waiting till some new ingenuity be devised in education, or, perhaps, some new adjustment in politics—on which, as if by the lifting up of a magical wand, the earth is to emerge into a state of life and of enlargement, and the millennium of their fancy and their hopes is to be suddenly realized. The real millennium that is awaiting our world, if to be introduced by miracle or by a preternatural visitation from without, which it very likely will, may come suddenly. But in as far as dependent on human effort, or even on grace attendant as it commonly is on the footsteps of a human process, it must come gradually. It must be with the moral or the spiritual as with the natural agriculture. To speed forward the one we must laboriously do the work of each furrow and of each field; and thus pass onward from farm to farm, till the whole earth is brought into its utmost possible cultivation. And so, for the purpose either of civilizing or of Christianizing the world, we must pass onwards from one family and from one district to another. Every whole is made up of parts—nor can we see how the whole is to be overtaken, but by each labourer or each distinct body of labourers acquitting themselves of their part, till at length the deed universal is made out, by a separate fulfilment and then a summation of the deeds particular. The way to reform a neighbourhood is just the way to reform a nation, or a quarter of the globe, or the great globe itself and all who inherit therein. This great achievement may be talked of in the lump; but it must be executed in detail. The thing must be gone about inductively. Our men of sublime and speculative genius, who have no patience for the drudgery of execution, may engross the ear of the public for a time with their generalized and magnificent way of it; but we must come to this way at



the last—after that the schemes and the systems of our modern theorists have had their course ; and the world has at last become tired of the conceits, and the crudities, and the thousand vacillating projects, and the as many abortions of our modern legislators.

16. But, recalling ourselves from this more extended survey to the means and the likelihoods of success in one little territory not half a mile from home—depending first on the power wherewith the kindness of those who are the messengers or the bearers of Christian truth operate upon human feelings, and secondly, on the power wherewith the self-evidence of the truth itself operates upon human consciences. On these we need expatiate no further ; but we might at least remark how precious, we had almost said how proud an achievement it is, when, by dint of these, the people of one district, nay, but one family or one individual, is transformed. Apart from the consideration of immortality, we know not a spectacle of greater worth, and we may add of greater tastefulness and beauty, even beauty of the highest order as belonging to the moral picturesque, than a Christian peasant—whose virtues are seen in all the greater lustre that they are arrayed in homely garb, or have taken root in a tenement of poverty—like the enhanced loveliness of a picture, made to stand out all the more strikingly by the darkness of the ground on which it is projected. Perhaps it is this contrast between light and shadow which causes it to be so fine an exhibition, when deep and thorough religious principle takes up its abode in the heart of an ordinary workman. But, however this may be, certain it is, that, as there is no one event that serves more to strengthen the foundation, so there is none which serves more to grace the aspect of human society—whether we look to his well-ordered household through the week, or to his well-filled family pew upon the Sabbath. If there be one sound more like the music of paradise than another, it is when the simple voice of psalms arises in morning or evening orisons from the lowly cottage ; or one spectacle more rich in promise, even the promise of fruit for immortality, it is when a cottage family is seen in full muster at the house of God. There is altogether such a refreshing moral healthfulness in the Christianity of humble life, that we feel for it, for the Christianity of artificers and tradesmen, a profounder homage than for the Christianity either of accomplished men of affluence, or of profound and learned theologians. The greatest of all national blessings, certainly the greatest national



reform, were to bring within reach of all, the means of this best and highest education. Herein lie the true dignity of man, the proudest rights and investitures of humanity. This is the genuine majesty of the people—unknown to mock patriotism, that seeks for the hosannahs of the multitude in another way and by other promises, which, never realized, only serve to flatter and deceive them.

17. They who incredulously regard the people as beyond the reach of this achievement, must be ignorant of that evidence in our religion which is addressed to the consciences of men—which evidence indeed is the great, if not the only instrument of Christianization, both in and out of Christendom. To this evidence in fact we owe the great bulk of our home Christianity. We on this subject make our confident appeal to the ministers of the gospel, and bid them tell what that is which originates and which fashions the Christianity of their own people. Was it a series of lectures on the deistical controversy? Was it the arguments of Paley, or of Leslie, or of Butler, that germinated their faith? Whether was it the doctrine in the book, or the history of the book, that was the instrument of their conversion? That the people might see the truth of the gospel, had they to plant an historic ladder, ascending from the present age to that of the apostles—or, by the lights of criticism and erudition, had they to guide them by a series of indices along the historic pathway, till they could lay their hands on the authenticity of the books of the New Testament; or the certainty of the narrative contained in it? If they have faith at all, they have a reason for their faith. They do see the truth of the gospel—and the question is whether they see it immediately, in the light of Scripture doctrine; or mediately, in the light of historical demonstration. When we enter the house of one of our cottage patriarchs, and examine the library which lies in little room upon his shelves—we may there find what that is which has begun, and what that is which alimments his Christianity. They are not books on the external history of the Bible. They are the Bible itself, and books on the internal substance and contents of the Bible. They are the Flavels and the Guthries and the Richard Baxters of the puritanic age who are his favourites—men who say little or nothing on the argumentative evidence of Scripture; but who unfold the subject-matter, and who urge, and urge most impressively, on the consciences of their readers the lessons of Scripture. In a word, it is by a perpetual interchange between the

conscience and the Bible that their Christianity is upholden—by a light struck out between the sayings of the one and the findings of the other. It is not a light which is out of the book, but a light which is in the book, that commences and sustains the Christianity of our land—the Christianity of our ploughmen, our artisans, our men of handicraft and of hard labour. Yet not the Christianity theirs of deceitful imagination, or of implicit adherence to authority; but the Christianity of deep, we will add, of rational belief, firmly and profoundly seated in the principles of our moral nature, and nobly accredited by the virtues of our well-conditioned peasantry. In the olden time of presbytery—that time of Scriptural Christianity in our pulpits, and of psalmody in all our cottages, these men grew and multiplied in the land—and, though derided in the heartless literature, and discountenanced or disowned in the heartless politics of other days, it is their remnant which acts as a preserving salt among our people, and which constitutes the real strength and glory of the Scottish nation.

18. Yet, however sufficient for the practical object of conversion that evidence may be as addressed to the consciences of the people, let none on that account detract from the importance of the external, or rather what may be termed the literary and argumentative evidence for the truth of Christianity. Without this last, Christianity would soon forfeit the respect and confidence of the enlightened and upper classes of society; and their influence, the infection of their example, would speedily descend among the people, among whom at length the ordinances of the gospel, and more especially the hearing of it, would fall into general neglect and desuetude. Even were it possible that our religion could have had its present experimental and popular, without its historical and scientific evidence; yet, wanting the latter, the former would cease to be operative, simply by its ceasing to be attended to. Whatever evidence may lie enveloped, like some pearl of great price in an unopened casket, in the subject-matter of Christianity—it must be altogether fruitless, without an earnest and persevering regard on the part of conscience-stricken inquirers, and, who in general too, are only so stricken in the act of reading their Bibles or of listening to the friends and the ministers of religion. But if in any country, Christianity should become the object of general contempt to the higher and more intellectual orders of the community, both ministers and Bibles would in process of time become the ob-



jects of general abandonment by the multitude at large. It is therefore well that Christianity possesses that which, on justice being done to its credentials and its claims, must command for it the homage of the most exalted whether in rank or in scholarship; and accordingly in Britain, where perhaps the aristocracy both of wealth and of talent is more virtuous than in most other nations, the erudite or academic demonstration of the truth of Christianity has been most studied; and it is well, we repeat, that Christianity is so firmly based on this species of argument, as to have kept its ground among the reasoners. It is not the power or the triumph of this argument which works among the multitude a general faith in the Christian religion; but it has helped, it has greatly though it may be indirectly helped, to maintain their general respect for it; and whatever the influence may be, whether it is hereditary attachment, or the mechanical operation of habit, or the testimony of their superiors in favour of the established religion, which keeps up their adherence to Bibles and to the pulpits of the land—it is in virtue of that adherence, that their minds are kept in a state of contiguity with the subject-matter of the gospel, and that the self-evidence which lies in the gospel itself is brought to bear upon them, so as to work in many that faith which is unto salvation. Distinction should be made between the initial and the final in this operation. It is not the learned argument that converts the unlearned, but the respect of the learned in society leaves undisturbed the respect and attention of the unlearned to the lessons of the gospel; and it is by the power of these lessons upon their consciences, that the unlearned among the people are converted. But what is more, it is not the learned argument that converts even the learned of the community. It may conciliate them so far as to command their acquiescence or their intellectual homage for the truth of revelation. It may satisfy their understandings as to the critical and historical credentials of the book; but to experience the truth in its power, or in its saving efficacy, they must become experimentally acquainted with the contents of the book. Their satisfaction with the credentials will, on the one hand, but aggravate their indifference to the contents of the Bible; and, on the other hand, it is only when they pass from the study of the one to the earnest and prayerful and conscientious study of the other—it is only after they have opened their Bibles and are devoutly and diligently employed in exploring its pages, that they are in likely circum-



stances for obtaining that faith, which enters alike into the mind of the philosopher and peasant, and prepares them alike for heaven. Both are admitted to the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven in the same way and upon the same footing at the last. The light which shines out of darkness, shines in the very same way on the mind of the most accomplished *savant*, and on the humblest of the common people. It is the light of its moral or experimental or doctrinal evidence manifested to the conscience which Christianizes them both; and even the proudest of reasoners must thus humble themselves and become as little children, ere the truth of the gospel becomes theirs—even that truth which is hid from the wise and the prudent, and is revealed only to babes.

19. The external evidence for the truth of Christianity is such as to leave infidelity without excuse, even though the remaining important branches of the Christian defence had been less strong and satisfactory than they are. "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." "And if I had not done the works among them which none other man did, they had not sinned." But the study of the historical evidence is not the only channel to a faith in the truth of Christianity. How can it, in the face of the obvious fact, that there are thousands and thousands of Christians, who bear the most undeniable marks of the truth having come home to their understanding "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power?" They have an evidence within themselves, which the world knoweth not, even the promised manifestations of the Saviour. This evidence is "a sign to them that believe;" but the Bible speaks also of another evidence, which is "a sign to them that believe not;" and should it be effectual in reclaiming any of these from their infidelity, a mighty object is gained by the exhibition of it. Should it not be effectual, it will be to them "a savour of death unto death;" and this is one of the very effects ascribed to the proclamation of Christian truth in the first ages. If, even in the face of that kind of evidence which they have a relish and respect for, they still hold out against the reception of the gospel, this must aggravate the weight of the threatening which lies upon them: "How shall they escape if they neglect so great a salvation?" It were well, then, if the effect of having studied the historical evidence should be a stronger determination than before to take our Christianity exclusively from the Bible. It is not enough to entitle a man to the name of a Christian, that he

professes to believe the Bible to be a genuine communication from God. To be the disciple of any book, he must do something more than satisfy himself that its contents are true—he must read the book—he must obtain a knowledge of the contents. And how many are there in the world, who do not call the truth of the Bible message in question, while they suffer it to lie beside them unopened, unread, and unattended to!

20. But if, on the one hand, the evidence which tells upon the people, should not lead us to undervalue that evidence on which Christianity makes its appeal to the science and the scholarship of the most enlightened in society—on the other hand, no evidence, whether external or internal, or with whatever truth and ability it may be expounded, should lead us to forget our entire dependence on the Spirit of God. All the powers and all the activities of nature will be of no avail, without the visitation of this preternatural influence from heaven. There is nothing to supersede the utmost diligence in the use of means—when told what that is which gives to means all their efficacy. It should not slacken the workman's hand, it should rather put him on all his strenuousness—when told that the high capacity in which he labours, is that of a fellow-worker with God: But still, if God be not recognised in the process, all human labour will be vain, and all human wisdom a mockery. In other words, if we want to insure success, prayer must be added to performance. The building of churches—the gathering of congregations—even the preaching of the word, with whatever eloquence of talent—all will turn out the unmeaning noise and bustle of an empty preparation, without the effectual invocation of a blessing from on high. The apostles, in the first ages of Christianity, seem to have been abundantly sensible of this—when they said, “We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”\* It was not enough to have preached the word, even with the purity of an apostle. It must be preached, not with purity alone but with power—even that power, given only to prayer, which opens the gate of heaven, and “moves him who moves the universe.” There is not a more delightful occupation than the prosperous management of human nature—when schemes of education and Christian philanthropy have so far a successful issue; and the boyhood of a before-neglected locality are now assembled in schools; and the people at large, obedient to the sound of the church-bell, are now to be seen Sabbath

\* Acts vi. 4.

after Sabbath in the house of God. But even this spectacle, inexpressibly pleasing as it is to the eye of taste, and full of promise and expectancy to every lover of his species, will terminate in a mere civil or economical reformation, and without any fruit for immortality—unless the windows of the upper sanctuary be opened, and living water\* shall be made to descend upon us. We might build our churches—we might chalk out our parishes—we might open our seminaries of learning; and raise, in the midst of some favourite and selected territory, a full complement of busy and well-ordered institutions, by which to send forth a moralizing influence upon the families. But, in the first place, to work aright this moral apparatus that our hands have reared, we are altogether dependent on the Spirit of God for the men; and, accordingly we are told, not merely to send labourers ourselves, but to pray that God would send them, who might enter on the plenteous harvest of our large and teeming population. And then for the efficacy, for the real saving and spiritual efficacy of their labours, we must continue to knock at that door which we cannot open—that light and grace may descend on this busy scene of human endeavours, and God may revive His own work in the midst of us. Could anything exceed the labour and the locomotion of Paul?—the fervour and constancy of his ministrations?—the weight and variety of his multitudinous cares? And yet what a life of supplication was his, as well as of sustained diligence and activity; and how he cast himself on the intercessions of his own converts—imploping the benefit of their prayers. And it holds true, not in the first age only, but in all ages of the Church. It is only by the union of devout hearts with diligent hands, that Christianity will either be planted firmly or propagated widely in the midst of us. Prayer and performance must go together. We should be as diligent as if men did all. We should be as dependent as if God did all. Our painstaking of itself will do nothing without prayer. And it is just as true that our prayers of themselves will do nothing without pains. It is the recorded experience of one of the most zealous and successful of Christian missionaries, that it is in the power of pains and of prayers to do anything.

21.—II. This reasoning on the means and the likelihoods of Christianization at home, is applicable, in many leading respects, to the question of Christianization abroad. The true philosophy of missions is comprehensive of both—resting on this basis, the

\* John vii. 38, 39.



identity of human nature in all the climes and countries of the world. He who made of the same blood all the nations that be on the face of the earth, hath also made them of the same spirit, planted within the breast of each and of every man the same mental economy; and, since the original formation of our first great parent, all have undergone the same degeneracy, and are universally smitten with the same moral disease—so that the gospel, whether in the house of our next-door neighbour or among the farthest wilds and on the most distant confines of humanity, meets with the same adaptations, the same sense of guilt, the same apprehensions of a coming judgment, the same felt need of a Saviour—in a word, the same fears and feelings and principles, which, similarly called forth by the Spirit of God, will give the very same response, and the very same reception to the truths of Christianity all the world over. We must not wonder at the uniformity in the result—seeing that the same doctrine meets with the same consciences everywhere. There is no difference in the objective truth, when we preach the same doctrine to every creature under heaven; and no such difference in the subjective minds on which we operate, as to make the reception of Christianity an event that might take place in one country, and be impossible in another. In a word, there are the same minds and the same consciences in both; and there is the same instrumentality brought to bear on both—even the one and unchangeable doctrine of the New Testament. And there is the same agent for giving effect to that instrumentality—even the Spirit of God, in whose demonstration and by whose power it is, that the truth is made palpable and efficient. So that by preaching alike in all countries the same truth, even the truth as it is in Jesus; and by praying alike for the same blessing, even for an illumination from on high—this truth is made manifest to consciences everywhere; or, in other words, the gospel of Christ may be carried with acceptance to all tribes and nations and languages.

22. It is thus that the philosophy of missions might be vindicated. It is an axiom in philosophy that we should look for a like effect from like causes—a like manufacture from like materials. In the work of conversion the materials on which we operate is the same, whether at home or in India—the identical human nature, that is characteristic not of tribe or of nation, but is characteristic of the species. The instrument by which we operate is the same—the identical doctrine of the Bible, the

identical message from heaven to all the people that be upon the earth. The power which gives the instrument its efficacy is the same—even that Spirit who bloweth where He listeth, and who with but the Bible to pioneer His way, disowns all the distinctions of savage or civilized life, and all the barriers of geography. In the prosecution of this cause, we transfer to other lands the very machinery which is at work in our own parishes. We translate the Sacred Volume, and circulate it amongst them. We send schoolmasters who might teach them to read this vernacular Bible. We send ministers who expound it. We knock at the door of heaven's sanctuary, that a virtue may descend from on high, and God may add the grace of His Spirit to the testimony of His word. We cannot overthrow the sufficiency of this process, but by an argument that would nullify all the Christianizing processes of our own land. We cannot put down this cause without passing sentence of extinction on the religious light of all Christendom. We cannot rightfully charge the work of missionaries beyond this limit with fanaticism or folly, without fastening the brand of these very imputations on the work of ministers within. If no Christianity can be formed there without the power of working present miracles, or the power of evincing to the belief of savages the reality of past miracles—then no Christianity can be formed here throughout the mass and great majority of our own population. But if Christianity can be formed here by the simple power of truth upon the conscience, this is the principle which opens the world to the enterprise of missionaries. Wherever there is a human being there is a conscience; and on this ground alone, the message of salvation might circulate around the globe, and be carried with acceptance through all its nations, and tribes, and families.

23. When the first missionaries went to Greenland, we may be sure that they had the ignorance of a most raw and unfurnished population to contend with. They thought they would go systematically to work—and before presenting them with the Christian message in the terms of the message, that they would give them some preparatory ideas on natural religion. For this purpose they expatiated in formal demonstration on the existence and unity, and the attributes, and the law of God. The Greenlanders did not comprehend them; and the missionaries were mortified to find, that, after years of labour, they had not gained a single proselyte to the truth. On this they resolved to change their measures—and, as a last desperate experiment, they gave

up all their preparatory instructions, and made one great and decisive step onward to the peculiar doctrines, and these too couched in the peculiar phraseology of the Gospel. When simply told in Scripture words of sin and of the Saviour, the effect was instantaneous. There was something in the hearts of these unlettered men, which responded to the views and tidings of the New Testament. The demonstrations of natural religion fell fruitless and unintelligible upon their ear; but they felt the burden of sin and of death; and pleasant to their souls was the preacher's voice, when it told that unto them a Saviour was born. They live on the very outskirts of population—and beyond them there is nothing seen but a wilderness of snow, and nothing heard but the angry howling of the elements. Who will say that the enterprise is chimerical, now that a Christian people have been formed in a country so unpromising, that the limits of the visible Church have been pushed forward to the limits of human existence, and the tidings of good-will to men have been carried with acceptance to the very last and outermost of the species?

24. The discovery that was made by the Moravians was converted by them into a principle which they carried round the globe; and which ever since has been the fertile source of their marvellous success in the work of evangelizing the heathen. They now learned that it was impossible to antedate the message of the gospel in any land, and they availed themselves of this Greenland experience in all their subsequent operations—among the Esquimaux of Labrador, among the Indians of North America, among the negroes of the Danish, and the Dutch, and the British colonies, and lastly among the Hottentots of South Africa. As the effect of their peculiar yet powerful moral regimen, villages have arisen in the wilderness; and we now behold men of before untamed and savage nature, as if by the touch of miracle, completely, because radically transformed—living in gentleness together, and tutored in the arts and the decencies of a civilized people. Many there are, who nauseate the peculiar evangelism which lies at the root of this great moral and spiritual change, yet are forced to admire the beauteous efflorescence which proceeds from it—just as there are many who can eye with delight the graces of a cultivated landscape, yet have no taste for the operations of the husbandry which called it into being. Certain it is that Moravians have become the objects of a popular and sentimental admiration among men, who could



not tolerate the methodistical flavour, as they may term it, of a Moravian Report—a thing just as possible, as that they might feel a most exquisite relish for their music along with a thorough distaste for their hymns. The fruit and the flower are both pleasing to the eye of nature, with many to whom the culture is offensive, and who could not look upon it without the revolt of nature's enmity to the truth as it is in Jesus. And therefore it is, that they look only to the one, and contrive to overlook the other. And accordingly Moravians have, of late, become the objects of very general request, as well as general admiration. Their services are everywhere sought after. It was a most substantial testimony in their favour, when the West India planters found the best results from their preaching and discipline, in the good order and fidelity of their slaves—proving of the most degraded and oppressed of our species—that still there was a moral nature within, which felt the adaptations of the gospel, and could respond to them.

25. This seems the best plan for the adjustment of the question, whether the first attempt should be to Christianize or to civilize—or which of these ought to have the precedency of the other. The Moravians themselves have innocently given rise to a delusion on this subject. The result in their converts has now become so striking and so palpable—they have at length succeeded in raising so beauteous a spectacle, as that of Christian and well-ordered villages, in what were before the frightful haunts of prowling and plundering barbarians—there is something so inexpressibly pleasing in the chapel services, and the well-attended schools, and the picturesque gardens, and the snug habitations and prosperous husbandry of reclaimed Hottentots, that Moravians are now extolled by sentimental travellers and eloquent writers as an example, nay, as a reproach to all other missionaries. And they have supposed, perhaps naturally enough, that what was foremost in exhibition was also first in time—that the Christianity, in short, was a graft upon the civilisation, and not the civilisation a graft upon the Christianity. There were none more hurt and scandalized by these eulogies than the Moravians themselves—and they have actually penned a vindication of their method, not against the censure of malignant enemies, but against the praise of mistaken admirers. The whole history, in fact, of their success, we may add, the whole history of Christianization since the days of the apostles, goes to prove, that wherever the faith of the gospel arises in the mind,

it is rooted and has its deep foundation in the workings of that moral nature which is common to all the species—and that it springs not from so thin a layer as that surface-dressing of civilisation, by which one part of the species is distinguished from another. And so it is, that they begin with the topics of sin and of the Saviour at the very outset of their converse, even with the rudest of nature's wanderers—and they find a conscience in them which responds as readily to their sayings, and with less of presumption and prejudice to obstruct their efficacy, as in the lettered Mahometan or demi-civilized Hindoo. It is true they also attempt, as all other missionaries do, to initiate into the arts and industry of Europe from the very beginning of their enterprise—and the two educations of religion and humanity go on contemporaneously together. It may, in some instances, be difficult to assign what the precedency is in the order of time—but as to the precedency in the order of nature, or in the order of cause and effect, there is no difficulty. It is not the previous civilisation which makes way for the Christianity—it is the previous incipient Christianity which makes way for the civilisation. This is the strict philosophy of the process. Christianity does not wait for civilisation—it is civilisation that waits and follows with attendant footsteps on Christianity. In a word, the message of God to man may be delivered immediately to all men. It is a message alike to the barbarian and the Greek—and here, too, as in everything else, there is the fullest harmony between the declarations of the gospel itself, and the findings of experience.

26. This explains that very prevalent misconception, in virtue of which it is, that while in the West Indies more especially, and indeed throughout a great portion of British society, there was such demand and admiration for Moravians, there was along with it some years ago so strong a remainder of dislike and even of derision for all other missionaries. The reason was simply this. The Moravians were the oldest of all our modern Protestant missionaries—and they had time to work up a more conspicuous result as the evidence of their labours. They also went through the very ordeal of contempt and of bitter calumny which other missionaries had still to undergo, and must continue to endure so long as the Christianity of the attempt stands out more nakedly to the eye of worldly observers; and the mantle of civilisation is not yet sufficiently thickened to cover it from their view. There may be even still a rawness in the more recent

village of Bethelsdorp, which is now most comfortably and completely seasoned away, in the older establishments of the Moravians. The one is just as solidly and deeply founded as the other, in the sacredness of the enterprise which led to it. But there may not yet be that secondary luxuriance which catches the eye and calls forth the homage of sentimentalism. The honey-suckle has perhaps not fully grown at each cottage door—nor may the picture yet be completed for the enraptured traveller to gaze upon, and at which he kindles perchance into strains of sweetest poesy. So meagre, so utterly superficial and ignorant and meagre, are the conceptions of those, who, while they would exalt the Moravians, do it at the expense of the Methodist and of all other missionaries. There is in it the mere finery of sentimental prettiness, without the depth of Christian principle, without the substance or the depth of philosophic observation.



## BOOK IV.

ON THE BOOKS OF THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN REVELATION, AND THE DEGREE OF AUTHORITY WHICH BELONGS TO THEM.

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### CHAPTER I.

ON THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE, AND MORE ESPECIALLY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

1. THE term "canon" has long been employed to distinguish the real or authoritative books of revelation from all other books, whether they pretended to this high character or not. The origin and significancy of the word in this particular application of it seem not very clear. In the primitive use of it, it denoted the tongue of a balance—whence, by no very distant transition, it came to mean a rule or standard. Every book that is the genuine work of an inspired man, is an absolute rule of faith or life for all who are addressed by it. St. Paul, in Gal. vi. 16, speaks of those who "walk according to this rule," κατὰ τοῦτον; and in Phil. iii. 16, he says, "let us walk by the same rule," τῷ αὐτῷ κανόνι. To walk according to the canon of certain doctrines or precepts, is to walk according to the rule and direction of the Scriptures which contain them—which may be well therefore termed canonical, because of their prerogative to rule, or because of the authority which belongs to them. Certain it is, that the term, in this sense and application of it, was very early, and at length very generally made use of in the Christian Church. It appears in phrases of constant recurrence throughout the works of Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Jerome, Augustine, Eusebius, and others.

2. We may be well assured that all those books which were admitted into the canon, obtained this high distinction because

of the peculiar respect and confidence in which they were held at the time, and which signalized them over all other books. But the testimony of these other and inferior books is regarded by many as the main, the fundamental evidence for the canonical rank of our present Scriptures. In the treatment of this question, we are liable to the same delusion as that which we have already attempted to expose. We are apt to look on the Bible, the whole Bible, as one book; and, instead of admitting its evidence in favour of itself, to search for the testimonies of writers external to the Bible—as if these constituted the only external evidence for the canon which can anywhere be found. It is forgotten that the Bible consists of no less than sixty-six separate compositions, all of them possessing the highest authority in ancient esteem—else they would never have been preferred to the place which they now occupy. The very circumstance which has caused their testimony to be overlooked, is that which gives the greatest possible weight and value to it. When a scriptural writer is deposed to by an ex-scriptural, this is a testimony of some account in favour of the former. But of far higher account surely, as generally the more ancient, and certainly the most trusted at the time by the best and most competent judges, must be the testimonies of the scriptural writers in favour of each other. These last testimonies have certainly been much overlooked, as if hidden from observation, by being placed within the four corners of the Bible. If so, they are a hidden treasure—nor have we been made aware of the whole richness and power of the argument in behalf of Scripture, till we have collected all the rays of evidence which pass and repass from one independent part of this great collection to another. There is a descending stream of light in the testimonies of subsequent writers; and these have drawn the principal attention of inquirers. But there is, in our estimation, a surpassing radiance of primitive and central light in the testimonies of the original writers; and so at least as to furnish the strongest internal evidence for the canon of the Old Testament. The later Scriptures must of course participate less in this advantage—as they depend more on the citations and references of succeeding authors. But it is truly fortunate, that, for the greater distance at which the more ancient record stands from the present age, and so the less satisfactory evidence by which it is either followed or encompassed, we should enjoy so full a compensation in that evidence which it harbours within the re-

ceptacle of its own bosom. We propose, therefore, that our chief attention should be given to this peculiar evidence for the canon of the Old Testament—as illustrative of a principle for which we have the highest value; and which we have stated and enforced in another place.\* It will afterwards appear, how much the establishment of the canonicity, if it may be so termed, of the Old Testament prepares the way for the inspiration both of the Old and of the New.

3. We are not to imagine, however, that the ex-scriptural evidence for the canon of the Old Testament is either weak or scanty. We have much of this evidence in the Apocrypha, from which also we gather, as we do abundantly from other history besides, the zeal and tenacity of the Jewish nation on the subject of their own sacred writings. In the first book of Maccabees, written, it is generally thought, about a century before the birth of Christ, and, as the best judges hold, by a more authentic historian than even Josephus, we have a vivid description of the sufferings of the Jews, under the persecution which they sustained from Antiochus Epiphanes. Among other cruelties we are told that “when they (the persecutors) had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire. And wheresoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any consented to the law, the king’s commandment was that they should put him to death.”† This is confirmed by Josephus, whose history indeed of this period is very much taken from the book that we are now quoting. “If there were any sacred book of the law found, it was destroyed, and those with whom they were found miserably perished also.”‡ This zeal of the Jews for the books of their religion forms a guarantee for their safe custody, and gives a confidence in their received catalogue of genuine and authentic Scriptures which we should not have felt, had the people been indifferent to the possession or the preservation of them. With such a national character as theirs, there lies immense evidence for the canonicity of the Old Testament, in the one circumstance alone, that its books were generally received and acknowledged by the Jews as their Scriptures, or the books of their religion, to the exclusion of all others. The state of their Bible, in the days of our Saviour, carries an evidence in itself, for its being indeed the true and the right state of it; nor can we imagine how that

\* See Book II. chap. iv. sec. 16, 17.

† 1 Mac. i. 56, 57.

‡ Jos. Ant. Book XII. chap. v. sec. 4.



evidence could be made stronger than by the disruption which took place between the Jews and the Christians; and yet the common recognition which both continued to make of the same Old Testament. Even could no express written testimonies have been adduced in favour of the books which compose the Hebrew Scriptures, there is a firm monumental evidence for them in the general use and esteem of their own people; and more especially as authenticated by the actual agreement between these two hostile bodies of witnesses, the Christians and Jews, who, though in the fiercest controversy against each other on the most vital questions, nevertheless unite in the homage which they render to our present Old Testament. This is an evidence patent to all eyes, and perhaps undervalued on that account—though, in our estimation, of tenfold greater weight than all the array of those testimonies which can be produced by the learned from Jewish authors, and also from the earlier of the Christian Fathers. It is well, however, that such an array can be exhibited. It is well that we are told by Josephus—“We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from, and contradicting one another [as the Greeks have], but only twenty-two\* books which contain the records of all the past times, which are justly believed to be Divine. And of them five belong to Moses which contain his laws, and

\* We now number thirty-nine books in the Old Testament; but these are all comprised in the twenty-four or twenty-two books, their estimated number in earlier times. Ezra and his Jewish colleagues are understood to have made out an enumeration of twenty-four books, comprehending, however, all the present books of our received Old Testament, and including none other. Their enumeration stood thus:—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel (our two present books in one), Kings (a similar reduction), Chronicles (again two in one), Ezra (which included Nehemiah), Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, and lastly the twelve prophets (being the minor prophets—Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi), in one book—making in all twenty-four books of our present thirty-nine. The later Jews reduced this number to twenty-two, so as to correspond with the Hebrew alphabet—not, however, by abstracting from the canon any of its parts, but by combining in two instances two books into one, appending Ruth to the book of Judges, and the Lamentations to Jeremiah. This method of classifying the books of the Old Testament variously has somewhat obscured the distinctness of the testimonies in their favour. In the general divisions, too, there was a want of uniformity. Josephus, it will be seen, enumerates five Mosaical or Legal Books, thirteen Prophetical, and four Poetical or Preceptive. Whereas with many of the Hebrew doctors, perhaps the most general reckoning amongst them was that of five legal, eight prophetic books, and eleven books termed by them Holy writings or Hagiographa. Still later the whole number of books was estimated at twenty-seven—not by the addition or abstraction of any of the parts from the whole, but by a variation in the reckoning of the parts. See Buxtorf's “Tiberias” for further information on this subject.

the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life. It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time : and how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by that we do ; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one hath been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change in them ; but it is become natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain Divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them. For it is no new thing for our captives, many of them in number and frequently in time, to be seen to endure racks and deaths of all kinds upon the theatres, that they may not be obliged to say one word against our laws and the records which contain them ; whereas there are none at all among the Greeks who would undergo the least harm on that account, no, nor in case all the writings that are among them were to be destroyed ; for they take them to be such discourses as are framed agreeably to the inclinations of those that write them ; and they have justly the same opinion of the ancient writers, since they see some of the present generation bold enough to write about such affairs, wherein they were not present, nor had concern enough to inform themselves about them from those that knew them ; examples of which may be had in this late war of ours, where some persons have written histories and published them, without having been in the places concerned, or having been near them when the actions were done ; but these men put a few things together by hearsay, and insolently abuse the world, and call these writings by the name of *Histories*.”\* It is further well

\* Josephus against Apion, Book I. sec. 8.—Had Josephus not chanced to bequeath this passage to posterity, ought the evidence for the Hebrew Scriptures to have been sensibly weaker in consequence ? Should not the faith of the whole nation of the Jews, accredited by the like faith of the whole body of Christians as to the books deemed sacred, and more especially when accompanied by such a mass and amount of evidence as can be deduced from the Scriptures themselves—should not this have compensated for the want of the ex-scriptural testimony of Josephus ?

that on this subject we have such a galaxy of evidence in the authors whom Josephus refers to in the foregoing passage—who wrote the Jewish history since the days of Artaxerxes; and who, though not esteemed of like authority with the canonical writers, might nevertheless (at least some of them) be confided in as faithful historians. Josephus intimates, as the reason why they were not so esteemed, that the nation was not so privileged as formerly with the visits of prophetic men. In other words, these authors did not rank with the sacred writers, and yet might rank very high as authentic narrators of the state and affairs of the Jewish people. The truth is, that most of them have incurred an undue discredit in consequence of the extravagant pretensions which have been made in their behalf, to an equal place with the writers of the Old Testament. But for this they would have been more generally appealed to—for the Apocrypha too contain a great amount of ex-scriptural evidence in favour of the Jewish Scriptures—such evidence as is exhibited in favour of the Christian Scriptures by Lardner, in his *Credibility*; where he makes a collection of citations and references to the New Testament from the works of the Christian fathers, who stood in the same relation to the New that the Apocryphal writers did to the Old Testament. It were well, if from these Apocrypha, along with the works of the earliest Jewish authors not canonical,\* there could be presented to the world such a digest or enumeration of testimonies in favour of the Hebrew Scriptures, as Lardner has made for the Christian Scriptures from the writings of the Fathers as well as of the Jews and heathens. The common reader will find it a confirmatory and profitable exercise, to read those Apocrypha which are well provided with marginal references—whence he will be able to collect a body of evidence both for the books of the Old Testament and for the history contained in them.† Ere we

\* More particularly Josephus and Philo. The latter has expressly quoted or referred to almost all the books of our present Old Testament as authoritative Scriptures—and to none others.

† Were a Lardnerian collection made from the Apocrypha in favour of the Old Testament, the following articles would find a place in it, among many others of the same character:—

2 Esdras i. 39, 40.—“Unto whom I will give for leaders, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Oseas, Amos, and Micheas, Joel, Abdias, and Jonas, Nahum, and Abacue, Sophonias, Aggeus, Zachary, and Malachy, which is called also an angel of the Lord” The twelve last named, associated with the three ancestral patriarchs of the Jewish people, include all the minor prophets, whose books were bound up in one volume. It is difficult to imagine that the author of Esdras should have derived these names from any other quarter than from



conclude this brief notice of the ex-scriptural evidence for the Old Testament, we would advise those readers who might wish to attain a complete view of this department, to make themselves acquainted with the express written testimonies of the Christian Fathers—who, in innumerable instances, depone to the canonical authority of separate books, and sometimes present us with catalogues of the whole. Of these, one of the most full and distinct is the catalogue by Melito, Bishop of Sardis, who flourished a little after the middle of the second century. He travelled into Palestine on purpose to learn the number of the books of the Old Testament. Eusebius says of his catalogue that it contains those Scriptures of the Old Testament which are universally acknowledged. The only difference in it from our present Old Testament, is, that he does not mention the Book of Esther. The difference, however, it is probable, is only apparent. The likelihood is that Esther was appended to some other book, as Ruth was to the Book of Judges; and that neither could be named therefore in those catalogues which observed that particular kind of distinction. At all events, the Book of Esther has abundance of other evidence to rest upon.

4. But without dwelling any further on the ex-scriptural evidence which there is for the canon of the Old Testament, let us now attend to the evidence which might be found on this subject in both the Old Testament and the New—which, instead of Scripture speaking for itself, is one part of Scripture composed perhaps by a different author and in a different age speaking for another part of it. We behold a succession of authors in the Old Testament, and a large contemporaneous group of authors in the New; and who, on every principle by which we estimate the credit and the confidence due to written testimonies, is each

this volume, or that his collection should have quadrated so accurately with the biblical one, but on the hypothesis of its anterior and separate existence—confirming therefore our other evidence for the ancient existence of these books—while, associated as these authors are with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it proves at least the degree of veneration in which they were held by the author of this Apocryphal writing.

Tobit ii. 6.—“Remembering that prophecy of Amos, as he said, ‘Your feasts shall be turned into mourning, and all your mirth into lamentation.’” An express quotation from Amos viii. 10. And like quotations may be had from the Apocrypha, of Jeremiah, Malachi, Joshua, Judges, Samuel—besides a large body of evidence scarcely less effective for most of the other books of the Old Testament.

We may add, that most invaluable confirmations are to be found in the Book of Ecclesiasticus—of which I shall only instance the attestations of its author, in favour of Ezekiel and Nehemiah.—Eccclus. xlix.

of them tenfold more valuable, than if, instead of being ranked as a sacred, he had been ranked as an Apocryphal or profane writer. The circumstance of his being reckoned worthy of such a distinction in ancient times, is the very reason why in modern times we should place all the firmer reliance on him. The Bible is not one book, but an aggregate of many ; and if, viewing it as such, we were to compute aright the force of that argument which lies in the concurrence of distinct and independent witnesses—we should find, not only for the facts of Scripture history, but for the deference and respect in which the various writers, particularly of the Old Testament, were held, a stronger chain of testimony, and on the whole, a brighter galaxy of light and evidence, than can be exhibited in any collection or credibility which might be framed of the best extracts from all other authors.

5. But before considering in detail, the scriptural evidence for each particular book of the Old Testament—there is a certain general evidence, of this very species too, that is applicable to them all ; and which attaches to these Hebrew writings such proofs of genuineness and authority, as are quite unexampled of any other documents that have been transmitted to us from ancient times.

6. First—there can be no doubt in respect to the Jewish nation, that one of their most resolute and characteristic principles, in every family where principle had the ascendancy, was a respect for their law ; and by consequence, for the books which contained that law, as well as for all other books received by their nation as of Divine authority. We cannot imagine a greater security for the faithful transmission of these books, than the obligation under which every conscientious Hebrew felt himself to lie, of diligently instructing his children both in the observances and history of his own people. For this being the general habit of the well-principled among them, we have the concurrent evidence of many different writers, not the less distinct from, and therefore not the less corroborative of each other, that they happen to be placed side by side within the limits of one volume. They were placed there, because of the respect held for them in former ages ; and they should not therefore suffer on this account in the estimation of later ages. Even so early as the days of Abraham, the father and prototype of the Jewish nation, we find this religious training of his own family singled out as the habit that most recommended him to the

favour of God. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."\* It is solemnly enjoined that the words of God, not as handed from one to another by oral tradition, but as committed to writing, and so forming the words of the book of a law,† should be taught by parents to their families. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates."‡ "And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law."§ This habit of transmission from father to son was not confined to the statutes and books of the nation; but it extended to their monuments, and the remarkable passages of their history. The stones of Gilgal may quoted as a distinct example of this. "And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land."|| "As for me and my house," says Joshua, "we will serve the Lord."¶ The stress laid on household or family tuition among the Jews, may be traced downward through the succeeding books of the Old Testament; and in passages greatly too frequent for the exhibition of them all. The tremendous destruction that came upon Eli's house is represented, in the first book of Samuel, to have been the consequence of his neglect of this duty. "And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house; when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the

\* Gen. xviii. 19.

† Deut. xxviii. 61; xxix. 21; xxxi. 26.

‡ Deut. vi. 6-9.

§ Deut. xxxii. 46.

|| Joshua iv. 21, 22.

¶ Joshua xxiv. 15.



house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever."\* In short, we may notice throughout the Old Testament everywhere, the indications of that parental tuition in the knowledge of their national religion, which seems to have been quite a habit and a principle among the Jews. That "which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children."† There was thus what might be termed a general family habit among the Jews, which made them all the more effectual keepers of the Divine oracles—this being one great purpose of their selection by God as His peculiar people. It formed a great security, not for the diffusion alone through the innumerable and unseen privacies of domestic life, but along with this for the certain preservation of their sacred writings—no decree of extermination, by the fiercest persecutors, being able to reach all the copies of a work so spread and multiplied, both within Judea and beyond the confines of it. It is true, there were seasons of general defection; but, in many instances, the books would remain in families, while the families themselves had fallen away from the worship and observation of their forefathers. And besides, there never was a universal defection. There were no less than seven thousand true worshippers, at the time when Elijah thought that he stood alone in his adherence to the ancient faith; and to them their Scriptures would be all the dearer, as the choicest relics which remained to them of the religion they loved—treasures not the less precious in their eyes, if, as in the days of cruel Antiochus, they were hidden treasures, because it was death to be found in the possession of them. Even then, when the book had so far disappeared from the Jewish court as to be there unknown—insomuch that to have found a single copy of it in the days of Josiah was tantamount to a discovery†—even then, it must,

\* 1 Samuel iii. 11-14.

† Psalm lxxviii. 3-6. See further in confirmation of this argument—Exod. xii. 26, 27. Deut. iv. 10; v. 29; xii. 28; xxix. 29; xxx. 2; xxxi. 13. Josh. iv. 6; xxii. 24-28. 1 Kings ii. 4; viii. 25; ix. 6. Psalm lxxxix. 30; cxv. 14, cxxxii. 12. Prov. xxii. 6; xxix. 15. Joel i. 3.

‡ 2 Kings xxii. 8.

though lurking in privacy, have existed in great numbers among the recesses of Jewish society : And this forms our first general argument for the Hebrew Scriptures which were acknowledged as such in the days of our Saviour, being the identical Scriptures that had been acknowledged all along, throughout the successive generations of the children of Israel.

7. But again, never was such an apparatus instituted in any nation for the maintenance of a religious polity, as among the Jews. A whole tribe was set apart for things sacred ; and we may be assured, that a principal care would be those sacred writings of which they were the special depositaries and guardians. Never did there exist such a number of professional men, whose appropriate business it was to watch over the books of their faith—such an agency for their transcription, so as to multiply their copies, whether for selling them out or for teaching them to the people. In like manner, as each father was the constituted instructor of his own family—so were their priests and Levites everywhere, who acted the part of instructors to the population at large. And accordingly, we read of this as their peculiar employment in those days of reform and restoration—when, after the suspension of these their ordinary engagements, they were again set to their accustomed work—marking what the established habit was in good and peaceful and prosperous times. In the days of Jehoshaphat, we are told that “he sent Levites and priests; and they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.”\* We read of a similar great reform in the time of good king Hezekiah ;† and also of Josiah, who, after having made discovery in the temple of the book of the law, took care that its contents should be made known to the people. “And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small; and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord.”‡ And the like was done by Ezra on the return of the people from the Babylonish captivity, who, from the pulpit of wood, read the book of the law of Moses to a large assembly of men and women ; and appointed priests and Levites who might cause the people to understand the law—and “so they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly,

\* 2 Chron. xvii. 8.

† 2 Chron. xxix.-xxxi

‡ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30

and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”\* We might well imagine that with so large an ecclesiastical body, there must have existed an immense number of safe and authentic repositories for the sacred writings; and, though it is only of one such repository that we are distinctly told in Scripture, yet the intelligent reader will not fail to perceive, by the history of that single instance, how perfect a security we have for the incorrupt transmission of the Old Testament, from the time of its original composition to the days of our Saviour. We mean the deposition of the book of the law of Moses in or beside the ark of the testimony.† “And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather thy people together, men, and women, and children, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children, which have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.” “And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.”‡ These passages

\* Neh. viii. 8.—It has been well observed on this passage that it clearly proves of the Israelites, that they must have had copies of their sacred writings during as well as subsequent to the Jewish captivity—seeing that when the people requested Ezra to produce the law of Moses, they did not entreat him to get it dictated anew to them (Neh. viii. 1); but that he would bring forth the *book of the law of Moses which the Lord had commanded to Israel*.

† It has been much disputed, both among Jewish doctors and Christian fathers, whether the book was deposited inside or outside the ark—and whether in a chest close to the ark of the covenant, or in a little cell annexed to it. Our own inclination is for assigning it an exterior place within the Holy of Holies, but without the ark of the covenant.

‡ Deut. xxxi. 9-13, 24-26.—We would further direct the attention of the reader to 2 Chron. v. 4, 5, where is recorded the transference of the ark and of all the holy vessels to the temple. We cannot doubt that on that solemn occasion, when the tabernacle and all that was in it was brought up, the book of the law would be similarly deposited as before.



are of immense value, as demonstrative of the care taken for the diffusion of religious knowledge among the people; and the latter particularly so, as affording a most signal demonstration of the safe keeping of their sacred records. For there is great reason to believe, that, after the book of the law of Moses was deposited in the ark, copies of all the other canonical writings, when once their authority was established, were placed there along with it. Certain it is, that, over and above the Pentateuch, we read of words written by Joshua,\* *in the book of the law of God*; and which would therefore in all probability have the same high place of memorial assigned to it—and more especially as they were the words of a solemn and enduring covenant between God and the people. It is true that when the temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, all the autographs that had been deposited there were most probably destroyed along with it. But there is every likelihood that, when the temple was rebuilt, and the canon of the Old Testament was established by Ezra and his colleagues—an ark was constructed for the reception of a copy of it, and placed in the Holy of Holies. It forms a strong confirmation of this, that, in the triumph of Titus at Rome, of which Josephus was both the historian and the eye-witness, the Book of the Law was carried in procession along with the other spoils of the temple. “But for those that were taken in the temple of Jerusalem, they made the greatest figure of them all; that is, the golden table of the weight of many talents; the candlestick also, that was made of gold, though its construction were now changed from that which we made use of: for its middle shaft was fixed upon a basis, and the small branches were produced out of it to a great length, having the likeness of a trident in their position, and had every one a socket made of brass for a lamp at the tops of them. These lamps were in number seven, and represented the dignity of the number seven among the Jews; and the last of all the spoils, was carried, the *law of the Jews*.”† This book of the law, Josephus informs us, was not deposited in the temple which Vespasian built to Peace, along with the golden vessels and instruments that were taken out of the temple at Jerusalem. This book, along with the purple veils of the holy place, the emperor reserved for himself, and kept in his own royal palace. And accordingly, it is a very general faith among learned men, that an authentic copy of all the canonical and authorized Scriptures was placed as they

\* Josh. xxiv. 26.

† Josephus, Jewish War, Book VII. v. 5.

were successively written in the sanctuary; and which copy could be appealed to, if indeed there ever was occasion for it, in every question of doubtful or different readings—and that thus a palpable distinction was kept up between the sacred and the apocryphal writings. Epiphanius says of the Apocrypha, that, “though useful and profitable, they were not taken in among the Scriptures. And therefore *they were not placed in the ark of the covenant.*”<sup>\*</sup> Damascenus also testifies of the apocryphal writings, that, “however good and beautiful, they were not ranked with the canonical writings, and *not deposited in the ark.*”<sup>†</sup> So that, though offered by their authors to the church, they were not thought worthy of a place beside the canonical and authorized writings, and therefore were not laid along with these in the ecclesiastical repository or ark. It is doubtless from this circumstance that the fathers termed the canonical writings *ἐνδιάθετοι*—because they understood that, when admitted into the canon, they were at the same time admitted into the sanctuary, and placed by the ark of the covenant; whereas, on the other hand, the *ἀπόκρυφοι* may have received their name, because they were restrained *ἀπὸ τῆς ἁγίας κρύπτου*, *from that holy crypt*, that sacred repository in which the canonical writings were preserved. This, then, is thought to have been the practice, both before and after the Jewish captivity; and it does seem a very formal and distinct acquittal of the trust which had been laid on that people, to whom, in the language of Paul, “had been committed the oracles of God.” Irrespective, however, of the evidence that exists for this especial observance, it is obvious that both in the general habit of Jewish families, and in the institution of so numerous and well-appointed a body of ecclesiastics, there did obtain among the Jews the most ample and efficient means for the fulfilment of this great purpose. The likelihood, at the same time, of this method of custody and preservation, is, we think, well made out, both by the quotations from Scripture, and the other testimonies which we have now exhibited; and receives moreover a certain confirmation from the practice in Jewish synagogues at this day—where a copy of the law is still deposited in a sacred receptacle, called by Tertullian *Judaicum armarium*, a little chest or press termed *armoire* in French, and thence transformed into *aumory*

\* Ἐν τῇ τῆς διαθήκης κιβωτῷ.

† Ἐνθάδεστοι μὲν καὶ παλαιά, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἀριθμοῦνται οὐδὲ ἔκειντο ἐν τῇ κιβωτῷ.

in Scotland. We do not think the full and absolute vindication of this temple process indispensable to our present argument ; and we are more disposed to regard it as but one beautiful and picturesque representation of it—and through which we are made to see, as if in picture, or to read as on a visible and enduring monument, the safety and integrity of the Old Testament records. The same process, however, was substantially repeated, we have no doubt, in the frequent synagogues of the land—nay, in many thousands of private families, alike zealous of their law and of the way of their forefathers ; and so as to afford a guarantee for the genuineness and preservation of the Hebrew Scriptures, of which there is no similar example in ancient history. The Jewish people were separated from the nations of the earth, for, among other reasons, the keeping and transmission of the elder revelations to the latter ends of the world ; and this one purpose at least of their marked and singular economy, has been fully accomplished by them.

8. But whatever obscurity may be conceived to hang over the methods of this more remote and ancient dispensation, we at length emerge into full assurance, when we come to the days of the New Testament ; and gather thence our third general argument, the strongest of all, we think, for the canonicity of the Old Testament writings. Nothing can be more certain than the use, the frequent use, made by the Jews from very early times, of written language as the vehicle of their alleged revelations. And the books to which they were thus committed, were signalized above all others by the religious estimation in which they were held. “ And the Lord said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there : and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written ; that thou mayest teach them.”\* “ And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.”† “ And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand : the tables were written on both their sides : on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.”‡ “ And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first ; and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou

\* Exod. xxiv. 12.

† Exod. xxxi. 18.

‡ Exod. xxxii. 15, 16.



brakest.”\* “And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the assembly; and the Lord gave them unto me. And I turned myself, and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the Lord commanded me.”† “And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life.”‡ “And it shall be, on the day when you pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over.”§ These quotations serve to prove how early writing was resorted to, in the communications between heaven and earth. The book that was “before the priests the Levites,” we have no doubt, was that laid up in the ark of the covenant, from which each king was required to write a copy; and we cannot imagine a more effectual device for the preservation of an autograph, and for the transmission of a book in its original integrity to future ages. But beside this, we may observe in these passages, what the written revelations were, in their earliest and most rudimental form—before they were expanded into books, whether smaller or larger, for circulation among the people. “Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it to the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel.” “Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel.”|| “Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord.”¶ “Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.”\*\* “The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.”†† “The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto

\* Exod. xxxiv. 1.

† Deut. x. 4, 5.

‡ Deut. xvii. 18, 19.

§ Deut. xxvii. 2, 3

|| Deut. xxxi. 19, 22.

¶ 1 Sam. x. 25—This act of laying up what he had written before the Lord, may be regarded as another example of the deposition of the Sacred Writings, in a sanctuary or consecrated place.

\*\* Is. xxx. 3.

†† Jer. xxx. 1, 2.

Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah."\* "So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon."† "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end."‡ These last quotations exhibit to us the origination of books, or parts of books, in the Old Testament; and did we offer, in addition to this, to present all the passages in which these books are referred to, all the traces that might be gathered along the course of the sacred history of the respect and estimation in which they were held—it would swell our extracts into many pages. We shall do it in part, when we investigate the evidence for the particular books, as, in those very extracts, there lies the essence of what we hold to be far the most valuable kind of proof for the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures. But it is enough at present, under the head of our third general argument, to state of these books that they were the objects of frequent and familiar recognition by the Jewish people. Their very names, though at first general, and such as were descriptive of a whole class, had at length, by the force of the definite article or by the annexation of an epithet, the exclusive speciality of an appellative. There are innumerable writings on all subjects; but these were *the* writings, and αἱ γραφαὶ or ἡ γραφή was appropriated to those writings which were esteemed by the Hebrews as Divine: Or, when a particular and express quotation was made, it was under the form of "this Scripture," αὐτὴ γραφή: Or they were distinguished by another phrase, "the Sacred Writings," γραφαὶ ἱεραὶ, sometimes τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα: Or, lastly, they were named "the oracles of God," τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ. These names were as much restricted to certain writings, and there was as little possibility of their being applied to any other—as "the Bible," § or the "Scriptures," or the Old and New Testament, would in the present day. They were the *voces signatae*, that marked out certain books collected by the Jews into a volume or volumes, and in universal recognition among that people. That a whole nation should make use of the same names, and without any difference in the application of them, proved a common understanding as to what the books were (and no others) which were held to be of scriptural rank amongst them.

\* Jer. xlv. 1.

† Jer. li. 60.

‡ Daniel xii. 4.

§ Bible—originally and generally, a book; and "the book," ὁ βιβλος, became the appellative of our present Scriptures.



Now the strength of our third general argument lies in this—that our Saviour and His apostles joined in this common use, and fell into this common understanding. They make use of the term “Scriptures,” without explanation, as if there had to be the adjustment of any difference between them and the Jewish people, on the question of what the Scriptures really were. There was in truth no such question betwixt them. What the Jewish people at large understood to be the Scriptures, Christ and His apostles understood to be the Scriptures. In other words, they all acknowledged the same Scriptures. We do not speak, at present, of the properties ascribed by Christ and the authors of the New Testament, to these writings of the Old Testament—for this comes more rightly under our view, when discussing the question of the inspiration of these books. But the circumstance of Christ and His apostles having acknowledged the same Old Testament with the Jews, is all in all on the question of the canon, and of the legitimate place which each of the separate pieces held in this received and authorized collection of writings. When Paul says of the Jews, that “to them were committed the oracles of God,” he had no different view of these oracles, these *λογια*, in as far as the written oracles were concerned, from what they had themselves. And in like manner when, in speaking to the Jews, he says of the gospel, that God hath promised it “afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures” \*—he does not make use of a designation that expressed to them one set of writings, while to his own mind it expressed another set of writings. To us it is a very strong circumstance, that what they held to be the “oracles of God,” and the “holy Scriptures,” he held to be the oracles of God and the holy Scriptures also. There was a common understanding between them on this point; and the same common understanding between our Saviour and His countrymen, when He told them to “search the Scriptures”—when He asked them, “Did ye never read in the Scriptures?” when He thus charged them, “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures”—when He argued with them, “How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled”—when He assured them “but the Scriptures must be fulfilled”—when He quotes their Sacred Volume by their own designation, “as the Scripture hath said”—and, lastly, when, making use of the designation, He ascribes to it this property, that “the Scripture cannot

\* Rom. i. 2.



be broken.”\* Our Saviour would never, in directing His countrymen to search the Scriptures, have made use of a term, that had the effect of sending them to the perusal of a different set of works or writings from what He himself intended. But this would undoubtedly have taken place, had He meant by the term “Scriptures,” any other collection of books than what they meant by it. Instead of which He made use of their own term, and gave no explanation—which He would have done, had His sense of it been different from theirs. But He knew what the common understanding was; and on this He proceeded, for He himself shared in it. The Scriptures of their estimation were the Scriptures of His estimation also. Or, in other words, we have the authority of Christ and His apostles, for the received canon of the Old Testament in their days being the true canon. Nor can we imagine aught so resistless in the way of proof, as the utter absence of any charge against the Jews, on the part of the first teachers of Christianity—as if they had vitiated or adulterated, or in any way mutilated and changed, their own Scriptures. When the apostle Paul says, that to them were committed the oracles of God, there is not one whisper of insinuation that they had in the least corrupted, or been at all unfaithful in their care and custody of these writings. But, strongest of all, our Saviour never laid any such condemnation upon them. Had there been any ground for such a condemnation, He, of all others, would, with the utmost promptitude and power, have charged it home upon them. It is true that they had made void the commandments of God, but in another way than by altering or vitiating the record of these commandments—by oral tradition; and He was not slow in charging them for this delinquency. We may be very sure, that, had there been any practising on their part with the Scriptures themselves—we may be very sure, that He, who denounced their traditions, would have denounced, as an offence still more flagrant, the sacrilegious liberties they had taken with the oracles of God. Instead of which, in opposing their traditions, He did it by means of an express quotation from the writings of Moses—making use of their Scriptures as they stood, and never giving us the least intimation in the course of His public ministry, notwithstanding His frequent allusions and appeals to them, that the true Scriptures were at all different from the acknowledged and received Scriptures. He set aside their traditions, but He did

\* Matt. xxi. 42; xxii. 29; xxvi. 54. Mark xii. 24; xiv. 49. John v. 39; vii. 38; x. 35.

unqualified homage to their Scriptures—two things as apart from each other in the days of our Saviour as they are now—as distinct and distinguishable, in fact, as the Hebrew Old Testament is from the Jewish Talmud, in which the traditions have been embodied and have received a local habitation and a name. Had the Jewish Scriptures, in our Saviour's days, been mutilated by erasures, or vitiated by admixtures, or right books been displaced, or wrong books inserted in their room—our Saviour would have told us so—or, in other words, had there been a false canon in these days. He would have stated anew for our information the true canon of the Old Testament. The information given by the Jews themselves in regard to the genuineness of their Scriptures, thus acquiesced in and thus deferred to by the Author of Christianity, we receive as at the mouth of the Saviour. The Jews and Christians separated from each other, with the very same list however of Old Testament Scriptures; and these, laying aside the great popish adulteration, and a few minor ones, remain unchanged with each of the parties to the present day. We cannot imagine a more secure basis for the canon of the Old Testament, than the authentication of that very list by Christ and His apostles—thus giving the benefit of all the evidence for the new, to the Scriptures of the elder dispensation.

9. We shall now enter, in detail, on the scriptural evidence for each of the particular books of the Old Testament; but before doing so, let us advert to certain larger divisions into which they were grouped by the Hebrews; and the traces of which are to be found in the Bible itself. There was the book of their Law, consisting of our Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, and originally written in one volume. There was the book of the Prophets, which yet comprehended certain of the historical, and excluded certain of the prophetical writings. There was, lastly, the book of the Hagiographa or Holy writings, the inspiration of which was not doubted by the Jews as to its reality, but which were distinguished from the former in their reckoning by the mode of the inspiration. Moses, the author of the first class of these books, was universally held to be the most illustrious of all their sacred writers, being the only one admitted to direct and personal converse with God.\* The authors of the second class were conceived to have had their communications made to them by dreams and visions, or even by a voice. The authors of the third class were regarded too, as divinely-inspired men, only that

\* Numbers xii. 6-8.



instead of being honoured by any sensible manifestations of the Divinity, they wrote under the impulse of a silent and authoritative guidance on their own minds. They were, besides, conceived to have no public mission as prophets, and so neither were their works, though inspired, read publicly. The circumstance of the book of Daniel being ranked among the Hagiographa, is ascribed to the power of evidence which lies in it for the truth of Christianity, and to the consequent apprehension lest, if read in their synagogues, they might lead any to embrace this religion. This distinction might appear to degrade certain of the writers of the Old Testament beneath the rank of infallible teachers from heaven; but it will be found not to affect the reality of their inspiration, only the mode of it—and even for this there seems to have been no solid ground—the reasons alleged for it by the learned among the Jews being of a very fanciful or legendary character. One great benefit of the scriptural evidence that we shall allege for each of the several books is, that it must restore the confidence which this distinction might have otherwise impaired—as it will occasionally be found, that there is a greater weight and splendour of this evidence for certain of the books which have been placed in the lowest class, than for many of those which have had a higher rank and precedency assigned to them. Whatever authority may be attached to the opinion of the Jews, respecting the methods and degrees of inspiration which obtained among the writers of the Old Testament—there can be no doubt of the threefold distribution, as if into three volumes, that was made of them. It is recognised in the Scriptures themselves; and we should lose a certain portion of the evidence that we are now in quest of, if we omitted the testimonies given, not separately to the individual books, but aggregately to one or other of these larger collections. We shall find traces at least for the book of the law as one separate book, consisting of the five books of Moses, but isolated from all other Scripture, even in the Old Testament; and in the New we have abundant evidence both for it and for the other two besides. “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets.”\* “For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.”† “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”‡ “And David himself saith in the book of Psalms.”§ “And he said to them, These are the words which I spake to you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written

\* Matt. v. 17.

† Matt. xi. 13.

‡ Matt. xxii. 40.

§ Luke xx. 42.



in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.”\* “For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate,” &c.† “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue to this day witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.”‡ “And when he had appointed them a day, there came many to him in his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.”§ “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.”|| “But even unto this day when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.”¶ That the book of the law was not confined to the legal part of the Pentateuch, is evident from its being appealed to for the historical facts of the narrative, as in Gal. iv. 21–26, where the story of Hagar and her son is ushered in by a challenge on those who are of the law to hear the law. And there is even reason to believe that the whole of the Old Testament was at times designated as “the Law” or “Book of the Law.” The quotation in John x. 34, seems to have been taken from the Psalms, and yet is said to be taken from the “Law.” The people, in John xii. 34, allege their having heard out of the law, that which must have been read or told to them out of the Psalms. And our Saviour, in John xv. 25, makes a quotation from the Psalms as from the law. The truth is, that the name properly and primitively annexed to one portion of the Jewish Scriptures was at length extended to the whole—as being all of the same complete and rightful authority over the faith and consciences of men.\*\*

10. Still, however, the Pentateuch is often singled out from the other Scriptures, by its original and appropriate designation of the Book of the Law. So that, besides the scriptural evidence for the individual books of the Pentateuch, there is much of that evidence to be found in the general references made to the Pentateuch on the whole, under the title of the Law or Book of the Law. But of the many citations which might be pro-

\* Luke xxiv. 44.

† Acts i. 20.

‡ Acts xxvi. 22.

§ Acts xxviii. 23.

|| Rom. iii. 21.

¶ 2 Cor. iii. 15.

\*\* There are besides quotations in the New Testament as from the law, of words only to be found in the prophets—so that their whole Bible must have often been designated the “Book of the Law,” and hence the strong probability that the book taken from the temple and carried at the Roman triumph, though termed by Josephus the book of the law, was the temple copy of the whole Hebrew Scriptures.

duced, a very few must suffice. "Observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee. . . . This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth."\* "As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses."† "And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses."‡ "But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the Lord commanded, saying," &c.§ "And Hilkiash the high-priest said, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord."|| David "left before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, and to do according to all that is written in the law of the Lord, which he commanded Israel."¶ "Also Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the Lord, by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the Lord, to offer the burnt-offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses."\*\* "Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt-offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God."†† "As it is written in the book of Moses."‡‡ "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. . . . And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month."§§ "On that day they read in the book of Moses, in the audience of the people."||| "Therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God." "As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us."¶¶ We could produce quotations equally express, but too numerous for insertion, that might be gathered from the New Testament.\*\*\* These are the testimonies of different ages, taken from different books, and marking the existence and authority of

\* Joshua i. 7, 8. † Joshua viii. 31. ‡ 1 Kings ii. 3. § 2 Kings xiv. 6.

|| 2 Kings xxii. 8. ¶ 1 Chron. xvi. 37-40. \*\* 2 Chron. xxiii. 18. †† Ezra iii. 2.

‡‡ Ezra vi. 18. §§ Neh. viii. 8, 14. ||| Neh. xiii. 1. ¶¶ Dan. ix. 11, 13.

\*\*\* Instead of exhibiting the words of these quotations in the text, let it be enough that we point out the places of them here. Mark xii. 19, 26. Luke ii. 23; x. 26; xvi. 29; xxiv. 27. John i. 45. Acts xv. 21; xxiv. 14. Rom. x. 5. 1 Cor. ix. 9. Gal. iii. 10. Add to these the whole substance and texture of the Epi-tle to the Hebrews.



a document intituled the Book of the Law, or the Book of Moses, in exceeding different periods of history—from the days of Joshua, bordering immediately on those of Moses, and at intervals downward to the age of Christ and His apostles. And what we have now alleged in behalf of the book of the law *in cumulo*, can also, as we shall see presently, be alleged of its individual parts. And it should be remarked, that each part shares in the benefit of such general testimonies, or testimonies in the gross, as have been just now adduced by us. A reference when made, not to a particular book, but to the book of the law, is an expression of confidence, an act of homage, done to the authority of the whole. A quotation from any one of the five books in the Pentateuch, if given not as a quotation from that particular book, but as from the Pentateuch at large, speaks for the respect in which the whole Pentateuch was held. In the language of Scottish law, it homologates the whole record. If a reference to the book of Numbers be made in *this way*, the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, all participate in the advantage of it. But let us pursue this scriptural, this best of all evidence, for the canon of the Old Testament, more into its details.

11. GENESIS.] The most satisfactory quotations are those which at once present the extract and name the book or the writer whence it is taken—yet, without naming either book or writer, such may be the identity or even close resemblance of the words extracted, as to demonstrate the reality of the quotation, and so to demonstrate the existence of the elder work at the time that the later work was produced. Even when the passage exhibited in proof of this does not amount to an extract, there may at least be an undoubted reference and allusion in it to the earlier publication. And there is a certain manner of introducing these quotations which demonstrates not only the existence of the prior document, but the respect and religious authority in which it is held. The phrase, “It is written,” *ἔστι γεγραμμένον*, when not accompanied with the mention of any book, is as much the appropriated phrase for indicating that the book referred to is a sacred one, as the term *γραφή* is of Scripture. And thus “Behold, it is written,” is tantamount, saving when the book is specified and is known not to be canonical, is tantamount to “Behold, it is in Scripture”—or, we have it in Scripture. And thus might we gather proofs out of the posterior Scriptures, not for the existence only but for the Divine authority



of the book of Genesis. We shall only in the text instance from the Old Testament, the continuous allusion made to its contents in the earlier half of the 105th Psalm. And we can only afford room for a very few of the many and decisive examples that might be adduced from the New Testament. "And man became a living soul," Gen. ii. 7. "And so it is written, The first man was made a living soul," 1 Cor. xv. 45.—"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh," Gen. ii. 24. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh," Matt. xix. 5. This last may be considered as an express quotation, being ushered in by the question, "Have ye not read?"—"And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness," Gen. xv. 6. "For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness," Rom. iv. 3.—"For a father of many nations have I made thee," Gen. xvii. 5. "As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations," Rom. iv. 17.—"Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bond-woman and her son: for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac," Gen. xxi. 10. "Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bond-woman and her son: for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman," Gal. iv. 30.—"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," Gen. xxii. 18. "Saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed," Acts iii. 25. —To understand the force of those quotations where neither the book nor the author of it is named, it should be recollected that when the same history is retailed in books of very different ages, the coincidence between them forms a strong presumption that the one book is referred to in the other—as strong as the improbability that the history, whether as it occurred or as it was told centuries before, could have been preserved by oral tradition. Hence the far greater likelihood that the histories, compendious though they be of the children of Israel in the book of Psalms, were taken from the Pentateuch, than transmitted verbally from ancient times. We should thus, too, appreciate the continuous allusion to Genesis, with several quotations from it, in the speech of Stephen, as recorded in the 7th chapter of Acts. In these, and many like passages, do we find the scriptural rank of the book of Genesis or the legitimacy of its

place in the canon clearly and fully acknowledged in the New Testament.\*

12. EXODUS.] In Mark xii. 26, we have an unquestionable extract from the book of Exodus; and there an express attestation is borne to it as "the book of Moses." This book is also identified with the book of the law of Moses by Joshua, when he quotes, in the 8th chapter and 31st verse, the precept in regard to an altar of stone not being of hewn stone, and taken from the 25th verse of the 20th chapter of Exodus. There is besides a lengthened continuous allusion to the contents of it in the speech of Stephen, recorded in the 7th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles—as also by Paul in the 11th chapter of the Hebrews. It has been computed that there are no less than twenty-five citations of this book by Christ and His apostles, beside the references which are made to it in the Old Testament, of which the larger specimens are to be found in the 78th and 105th and 106th Psalms, and in the prayer of Nehemiah. The following are a few of the more particular instances.—"And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you," Ex. xiii. 19. "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem," Josh. xxiv. 32.—"Neither shall ye break a bone thereof," Ex. xii. 46. "For these things were done that the Scriptures should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken," John xix. 36.—"And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night," Ex. xiii. 21. "Moreover, thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar, and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way

\* See further—

Gen. i. 10.—Ps. xxxiii. 7.  
i. 18.—Jer. xxxi. 35.  
v. 1.—1 Chr. i. 1.  
x. 2. i. 5.  
x. 6. i. 8.  
x. 22. i. 17.  
x. 25. i. 19.  
xi. 10. i. 17.  
xi. 16. i. 19.  
xi. 26. i. 26.  
xi. 81.—Neh. ix. 7.  
xii. 1.—Acts vii. 3.

Gen. xv. 5.—Rom. 4. 18.  
xv. 13, 14.—Acts vii. 6, 7.  
xviii. 18.—Acts iii. 25.  
xxi. 2.—Heb. xi. 11.  
xxi. 12.—Rom. ix. 7.  
xxii. 16, 17.—Heb. vi. 13, 14.  
xxv. 2.—1 Chr. i. 32.  
xxv. 13.—1 Chr. i. 29.  
xxv. 23.—Rom. ix. 12.  
xxv. 26.—Hos. xii. 3.  
xxvii. 41.—Obad. 10.  
xxxii. 26.—Hos. xii. 4.  
xxxvi. 4. 10.—1 Chr. i. 35.

Gen. xxxvi. 20.—1 Chr. i. 38.  
xxxviii. 2, 7. ii. 3.  
xlvi. 6.—Josh. xxiv. 4.  
xlvi. 8.—1 Chr. v. 1.  
xlvi. 10. iv. 24.  
xlvi. 11. vi. 1, 16.  
xlvi. 13, 17, 21. vii. 1, 6, 30;  
viii. 1.  
xlvi. 27.—Acts vii. 14.  
xlvii. 31.—Heb. xi. 21.  
xlviii. 5.—Josh. xiv. 4.  
xlix. 4.—1 Chr. v. 1

wherein they should go," Neh. ix. 12.—"Thou shalt not curse the ruler of thy people," Ex. xxii. 28. "For it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people," Acts xxiii. 5.—"I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," Ex. xxxiii. 19. "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," Rom. ix. 15.—These quotations are perfectly decisive. We subjoin the places where other references will be found; and from which it will be seen that the scriptural rank of this book is expressly recognised, more especially in the New Testament.\*

13. LEVITICUS.] The Epistle to the Hebrews may be regarded as throughout one sustained testimony in favour of this book—the one, in the language of Augustine, treating "*de Christo exhibendo*;" the other, "*de Christo exhibitio*." The same doctrine which is latent in the one, is made patent in the other, even that doctrine of the new, which is invested in the drapery of the old dispensation. It is a folded drapery in the book of Leviticus; but it is an unfolded drapery in the Epistle to the Hebrews; and we may therefore well expect a continued reference from the later to the earlier composition. But indeed the whole history of the Jews may be regarded as a running commentary on this portion of Scripture; and it were therefore a work of immense labour to develop the whole evidence that might be adduced for the ancient existence of this book, and for the deference that was paid to it. We must restrain ourselves to a very few examples out of the countless multitude. "Every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt," Lev. ii. 13. "Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt,"

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| * Ex. iii. 5.—Josh. v. 15.     | Ex. xv. 5-8.—Ps. lxxviii. 13. | Ex. xx. 12.—Eph. vi. 2, 3.  |
| iii. 6.—Matt. xxii. 32.        | cvii. 11.                     | xx. 12-16.—Matt. xix. 18,   |
| Mark xii. 26.                  | xv. 14, 16.—Josh. ii. 9       | 19.                         |
| Luke xx. 37.                   | xvi. 14.—Ps. lxxviii. 24.     | xxi. 2, 17.—Jer. xxxiv. 14. |
| vi. 14-16, 18.—1 Chr. v. 3     | xvi. 18.—2 Cor. viii. 15.     | Prov. xx. 20.               |
| iv. 24.                        | xvi. 35.—Josh. v. 12.         | xxii. 31.—Ezek. xlv. 31.    |
| vi. 1, 2.                      | Neh. ix. 15.                  | xxxiii. 23, 28, 33.—        |
| vii. 20.—Ps. lxxviii. 44.      | xvii. 6, 14.—Ps. lxxvii. 15.  | Josh. xxiv. 11, 12.         |
| ix. 16.—Rom. ix. 17.           | cv. 41.                       | xxiii. 13.                  |
| xiii. 2.—Luke ii. 23.          | 1 Sam. xv. 3.                 | Judges ii. 3.               |
| xiii. 12.—Ezek. xlv. 30.       | xix. 6.—1 Pet. ii. 9.         | xxiv. 8.—Heb. ix. 20.       |
| xiii. 21.—Ps. lxxviii. 14.     | xx. 2, 4, 9.—Ps. lxxx. 10.    | xxv. 40. viii. 5.           |
| xiv. 9.—Josh. xxiv. 6.         | xcvii. 7.                     | xxxi. 2.—1 Chr. ii. 20.     |
| xiv. 21, 22, 28.—Josh. iv. 23. | Ezek. xx. 12.                 |                             |



Mark ix. 49.—“And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles or two young pigeons,” Lev. xii. 8. “And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons,” Luke ii. 24.—“Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments; which if a man do, he shall live in them,” Lev. xviii. 5. “And I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall ever live in them,” Ezek. xx. 11.—“Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy,” Lev. xix. 1. “Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy,” 1 Pet. i. 16.—“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” Lev. xix. 18. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” Matt. xxii. 39, Rom. xiii. 9, Gal. v. 14. “According to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” James ii. 8.—“Eye for eye, tooth for tooth,” Lev. xxiv. 20. “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” Matt. v. 38.—“And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people,” Lev. xxvi. 12. “As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people,” 2 Cor. vi. 16. We cannot take leave of this book, without advert-  
ing to the rich mine of evidence that awaits those students of the Mosaic ritual, who have the patience to explore and the taste to enjoy those recondite harmonies, which obtain between the Christianity in figure of the Old, and the Christianity in substance and express declaration of the New Testament.\*

\* It is a beautiful saying of Jerome, “In Levitico singula sacrificia, imo singulæ pene syllabæ, et vestes Aaron, et totus ordo Leviticus spirant cœlestia sacramenta.” The doctors of the ancient Church tell us, “Literam hujus libri inutilem aut etiam noxiam, si spoliatur spirituali intelligentia.” For further scriptural references to the book of Leviticus, see—

Lev. viii. 12.—Ps. cxxxiii. 2.	James v. 12.	Lev. xxv. 36.—Ezek. xviii. 8.
x. 1.—1 Chr. xxiv. 2.	Prov. xxiv. 23.	xxii. 12.
xi. 44.—1 Pet. i. 15.	James ii. 9.	xxv. 39.—Jer. xxxiv. 14.
xii. 3.—Luke ii. 21.	1 John ii. 11.	xxv. 43.—Eph. vi. 9.
John vii. 22.	Matt. xviii. 15.	Col. iv. 1.
xiii. 46.—2 Kings xv. 5.	Lev. xix. 36.—Prov. xi. 1.	xxvi. 1, 8, 14, 17.—Josh.
xiv. 2-4.—Matt. viii. 4.	xx. 10.	xxiii. 10.
Mark i. 44.	xx. 9, 10.—Prov. xx. 20.	Ps. xcvi. 7.
Luke v. 14.	Matt. xv. 4.	Lam. ii. 17.
xvi. 34.—Heb. ix. 7.	John viii. 5.	Mal. ii. 2.
xviii. 5.—Gal. iii. 12.	xxii. 8.—Ezek. xlv. 31.	Prov. xxvii. 1.
xviii. 21.—2 Kings xxiii. 10.	xxiii. 3.—Luke xiii. 14.	xxvi. 44.—Rom. xi. 2.
xix. 12, 15, 17, 18.—Matt. v.	xxiv. 9.—Matt. xii. 4.	

14. NUMBERS.] There are several striking and decisive testimonies to this book which might be singled out from that crowd of references scattered over the Old and the New Testament. Of these the first which occur to us are the type of the brazen serpent—the red heifer by Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews—and the Nazarite by Matthew (ii. 23). The references from the earlier Scriptures, as in Joshua, have often this remarkable distinctness in them, that they state a commandment to be found in the book of Numbers, as the commandment of Moses, or of God by Moses—thus connecting with it the name of this prophet and inspired man. The following is a part of these scriptural testimonies. “And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting,” Numb. xi. 4. “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted,” 1 Cor. x. 6.—“My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house,” Numb. xii. 7. “Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was in all his house,” Heb. iii. 2.—“And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part, and thine inheritance, among the children of Israel,” Numb. xviii. 20. “Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as he said unto them,” Josh. xiii. 14. “But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them,” Josh. xiii. 23.—“And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived,” Numb. xxi. 9. “He removed the high places and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it; and he called it Nehushtan,” 2 Kings xviii. 4. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up,” John iii. 14.—“And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass; and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?” Numb. xxii. 28. “But was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass speaking with man’s voice forbade the madness of the prophet,” 2 Peter ii. 16.—“Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses; but one witness shall not testify against any person to

cause him to die," Numb. xxxv. 30. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses," Heb. x. 28.\*

15. DEUTERONOMY.] In this book we are told of two most important securities for its own preservation, if not rather for the preservation of the whole book of the law of Moses. The first is an injunction given to each king, that he should copy this law in a book, and read it continually; Deut. xvii. 18, 19. And secondly, there is an injunction for reading this law to all Israel once in seven years, for the sake both of the people's knowledge and of their children, Deut. xxxi. 9-13. The practice of far more frequent public reading than this is clearly stated in Acts xv. 21. "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day." It is in this book also we are told of a third great security for the Jewish canon, in the deposition of the book of the law in the ark (Deut. xxxi. 26), as in a place of safe and sufficient custody for those oracles of God which had been committed to the nation. Certain it is that this particular book of Deuteronomy is the subject of clearest references and quotations in other parts of Scripture, as in Rom. xii. 19, "It is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord;" and in Hebrews x. 30, "We know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." These are clearly taken from Deut. xxxii. 35. The phrase, "It is written," when thus introduced, is tantamount to, "we have it in Scripture." It is quite doing scriptural homage to any book, when it is quoted

\* See further—

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| Numb. iii. 4.—1 Chr. xxiv. 2. | Numb. xx. 13.—Ps. cvi. 32. | Numb. xxxi. 8.—Josh. xiii. 21. |
| iii. 13.—Luke ii. 23.         | xxi. 6.—1 Cor. x. 9.       | xxxii. 16.—2 Pet. ii. 15.      |
| iii. 17.—1 Chr. vi. 1.        | xxi. 21.—Judges xi. 19.    | xxxii. 20.—Josh. i. 13, 14.    |
| ix. 12.—John xix. 36.         | xxi. 24.—Josh. xii. 1.     | xxxii. 27.—Josh. iv. 12.       |
| ix. 18.—1 Cor. x. 1.          | Ps. cxxxv. 10, 11.         | xxxii. 33.—Josh. xiii. 8.      |
| x. 35.—Ps. lxxviii. 1, 2.     | Amos ii. 9.                | xxxii. 4.                      |
| xi. 1. lxxviii. 21.           | xxii. 5.—Josh. xxiv. 9.    | xxxiii. 51, 52.—Josh. xi.      |
| xi. 23.—Is. i. 2.             | xxii. 23.—Jude 11.         | 12.                            |
| lix. 1.                       | xxv. 4.—Josh. xxii. 17.    | xxxiii. 55.—Josh. xxiii. 13.   |
| xi. 31, 33.—Ps. lxxviii. 26,  | xxv. 7.—Ps. cvi. 30.       | Judg. ii. 3.                   |
| 30, 31.                       | xxv. 9.—1 Cor. x. 8.       | xxxiv. 3.—Josh. xv. 1.         |
| xiv. 18. cliii. 8.            | xxvi. 5.—1 Chr. v. 1.      | xxxiv. 14.—Josh. xiv. 2, 3.    |
| xiv. 37.—1 Cor. x. 10.        | xxvi. 29.—Josh. xvii. 1.   | xxxiv. 17.—Josh. xix. 51.      |
| Heb. iii. 17.                 | xxvi. 55.—Josh. xi. 23.    | xxxv. 2.—Josh. xxi. 2.         |
| Jude 5.                       | xiv. 2.                    | xxxv. 6.—Josh. xx. 2.          |
| xvi. 1. Jude 11.              | xxvi. 65.—1 Cor. x. 5, 6.  | xxi. 3, 4.                     |
| xvi. 31.—Ps. cvi. 17,         | xxvii. 1.—Josh. xvii. 3.   | xxxvi. 2.—Josh. xvii. 3.       |



in this way. But we must now begin to limit the number of our examples ; for, should we attempt a full presentation of these, the work would be quite interminable. Once more, however, we shall offer, for this book too, a pretty copious list of those notices which are made of it, throughout the Old and New Testament. The following specimens we give at large in the text. "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire," Deut. iv. 24. "For our God is a consuming fire," Heb. xii. 29. "Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God," Deut. vi. 16.—"Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," Matt. iv. 7.—"Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live," Deut. viii. 3. "It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God," Luke iv. 4.—"Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God ; him shalt thou serve," Deut x. 20. "Get thee hence, Satan ; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," Matt. iv. 10.—"I will raise thee up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth ; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him," Deut. xviii. 18. See also, xviii. 15. "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me ; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you," Acts iii. 22. See also, Acts vii. 37.—"He that is hanged is accursed of God"—therefore "his body shall not remain all night upon the tree," Deut. xxi. 23. "For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Gal. iii. 13.—"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord ; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever," Deut. xxiii. 3. "On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people ; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever," Neh. xiii. 1.—"When a man hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her ; then let him write her a bill of divorce-ment, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house," Deut. xxiv. 1. "And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorce-ment, and to put her away," Mark x. 4.—"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers ; every man shall be put to

death for his own sin," Deut. xxiv. 16. "But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the Lord commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children put to death for the fathers: but every man shall be put to death for his own sin," 2 Kings xiv. 6.—"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox, when he treadeth out the corn," Deut. xxv. 4. "For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," 1 Cor. ix. 9.—"If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her," Deut. xxv. 5. "Master, Moses said, If a man die having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother," Matt. xxii. 24.—"And there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones; thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them: thou shalt build the altar of the Lord thy God of whole stones," Deut. xxvii. 5, 6. "As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, An altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron," Josh. viii. 31.—"Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them," Deut. xxvii. 26. "For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10.—"For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it," Deut. xxx. 11-14.—"Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven—or, who shall descend into the deep? But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart," Rom. x. 6-8.—"I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation," Deut. xxxii. 21. "Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you," Rom. x. 19.—"Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people," Deut. xxxi.

43. "And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people," Rom. xv. 10.\*

16. JOSHUA.] We must now be more sparing of our quotations. Distinction is made by the Jewish biblists between the elder and the later prophets; or between those who lived prior and posterior to the days of King Uzziah. Certain it is that Zechariah i. 4, warns the children of Israel against being as their fathers, unto whom the former prophets had cried. And as the book of Joshua is ranked by them as a prophetic book, he has an undisputed title to a place in the earlier of the two divisions. We have strong evidence that the book existed in the days of Ahab, though not that Joshua was the writer of it. "And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it," Josh. vi. 26. "In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his younger son Segub, according to the word of the Lord which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun," 1 Kings xvi. 34. Of this, and indeed most other of the historical books, though we have very strong traditions in regard to

\* See further—

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| Deut. iii. 12.—Josh. xiii. 8. | Deut. xi. 29.—Josh. viii. 33. | Deut. xxv. 3.—2 Cor. xi. 24. |
| iii. 20. xxii. 4.             | xii. 3.—Judges ii. 2.         | xxv. 4.—1 Tim. v. 18.        |
| iv. 2. i. 7.                  | xii. 5.—1 Kings viii. 29.     | xxv. 5.—Mark xii. 19.        |
| iv. 2.—Rev. xxii. 18.         | 2 Chr. vii. 12.               | Luke xx. 28.                 |
| iv. 43.—Josh. xx. 8.          | xv. 12.—Jer. xxxiv. 14.       | xxv. 7.—Ruth. iv. 1, 2, &c.  |
| v. 6.—Ps. lxxxi. 10.          | xvii. 6.—Heb. x. 28.          | xxvi. 15.—Is. lxiii. 15.     |
| v. 10.—Jer. xxxii. 18.        | xviii. 1.—1 Cor. ix. 13.      | xxvii. 2.—Josh. iv. 1.       |
| v. 17.—Matt. v. 21.           | xviii. 15, 18.—John i. 45.    | xxvii. 14, &c.—Dan. ix.      |
| v. 18.—Luke xviii. 20.        | Acts vii. 37.                 | 11.                          |
| v. 19.—Rom. xiii. 9.          | xix. 2.—Josh. xx. 2.          | xxviii. 15.—Lam. ii. 17.     |
| vi. 5.—Matt. xxii. 37.        | xix. 9. xx. 7.                | xxviii. 37.—1 Kings ix. 7.   |
| Mark xii. 30.                 | xix. 15.—Matt. xviii. 16.     | Jer. xxiv. 9.                |
| Luke x. 27.                   | John viii. 17.                | xxv. 9.                      |
| vii. 20.—Josh. xxiv. 12.      | 2 Cor. xiii. 1.               | xxviii. 53.—2 Kings vi.      |
| vii. 25. vii. 1, 21.          | xix. 21.—Matt. v. 38.         | 28.                          |
| ix. 3.—Heb. xii. 29.          | xx. 8.—Judges vii. 3.         | Lam. iv. 10.                 |
| x. 17.—2 Chr. xix. 7.         | xx. 14.—Josh. viii. 2.        | xxix. 9.—Josh. i. 7.         |
| Acts x. 34.                   | xxiii. 25.—Matt. xii. 1.      | 1 Kings ii. 3.               |
| Rom. ii. 11.                  | Mark ii. 23.                  | xxix. 24. ix. 8.             |
| x. 20.—Luke iv. 8.            | Luke vi. 1.                   | Jer. xxii. 8.                |
| xi. 6.—Ps. cvi. 17.           | xxiv. 1.—Matt. v. 31.         | xxx. 23.—Josh. i. 6.         |
| xii. 24.—Josh. i. 3.          | xix. 7.                       | xxxii. 17.—1 Cor. x. 20.     |
| xiv. 9.                       | xxiv. 16.—2 Chr. xxv. 4.      | xxxii. 30.—Jos. xiii. 10.    |



their human authors, we have no scriptural certainty about them—or rather, it were more proper to say, that, with the evidence we have of their Divine authorship, our only uncertainty respected the amanuenses of these writings. As to the book of Joshua, we have several examples of the New Testament having incorporated parts of its history into its own pages.—"So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city," Josh. vi. 20. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days," Heb. xi. 30.—"And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel," Josh. vi. 23. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace," Heb. xi. 31. But we have far more ancient references than this, as the following: "And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in mount Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaash," Josh. xxiv. 30. "And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash," Judges ii. 9.\*

17. JUDGES.] This history begins where that of Joshua ends, or takes up the narrative of Jewish affairs immediately after the death of the great captain of Israel, of which event it makes mention. The portion of history embraced in this book is made the subject of a general reference by Paul in Acts xiii. 19-21; as also in the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews. "And after that he gave unto them judges," &c., Acts xiii. 20. Here Paul, by quoting history that was only recorded in the book of Judges, at the same time and in the same manner with other history only recorded in the book of Exodus, does equal honour to both these books, and expresses the like confidence in both. The following is a distinct allusion to a subject in this book. "And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the Lord set every

\* See further—

Josh. i. 5.—Heb. xiii. 5.  
ii. 1. xi. 31.  
James ii. 25.

Josh. x. 12, 13.—Is. xxviii. 21. Josh. xix. 47.—Judg. xviii. 29.  
Hab. iii. 11. xx. 8.—1 Chr. vi. 78.  
xv. 14.—Judges i. 10. xxi. 12. vi. 56.  
xvi. 2. i. 26.

man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host," Judges vii. 22. "For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian," Isaiah ix. 4. That the transactions in this book were written at a very early period, is obvious from the mention of them in the books of Samuel, and in the Psalms—as the reader may perceive by comparing Judges iv. 2; vii. 4; xi. 2; with 1 Samuel xii. 9-11—Judges ix. 53, with 2 Samuel xi. 21—and Judges v. 5, with Psalm lxviii. 8, 9. It is a striking proof of the early composition of the book of Judges, that, at the time of its being written, as appears from i. 21, the Jebusites still dwelt in Jerusalem—whereas we might infer from 2 Samuel v. 6, &c., that the total expulsion of them from that city must have taken place at the hands of David. Other vestiges of its high antiquity are to be found, and so as to harmonize with the idea that Samuel was the writer of it. For Samuel being a writer of Scripture, we have strong evidence in Acts iii. 21-24, particularly in the latter of these two verses, where it is said that "all the prophets from Samuel have foretold of these days." That he was the writer of the book of Judges, is the confident opinion of many of our biblists. We might add, though without laying much stress on the observation, that if the adage of Matt. ii. 23, be a reference to Judges xiii. 5, 7, then is there testimony in one of the gospels to the prophetic character of this book.\*

18. RUTH.] There are certain of the books, whose canonicity reposes mainly on the undoubted fact of their having entered as constituent parts into that collection of writings termed Scripture, in the days of the New Testament; and on the homage rendered to them generally, and without any exception whatever, being specified by the founders of the latter dispensation—and that notwithstanding their earnest and repeated dissuasives against vain traditions, or "Jewish fables" of all sorts, or aught that in any shape made unwarrantable usurpation of a Divine authority. We are not, however, altogether destitute of scriptural allusions to the subject-matter, of which this book is the only known record—as may be seen in the references below.† In the first verse of the first chapter of this book, the era of the

\* See further—

Jud. iv. 7, 15.—Ps. lxxxiii. 9, 10.	Jud. vi. 11.—Heb. xi. 32.	Jud. xi. 1.—Heb. xi. 32.
v. 5.	xvii. 5.	vii. 25.—Ps. lxxxiii. 11.
		xvi. 17.—Matt. ii. 23.

† Ruth ii. 1; Matt. i. 5. Ruth iv. 12; 1 Chr. ii. 4; Matt. i. 3. Ruth iv. 18; 1 Chr. ii. 4; Matt. i. 3.

judges is spoken of, as having already elapsed; and in the last verse of the last chapter, the genealogy of Ruth's family terminates with David—which intimates it to have been written in the days of this Jewish monarch; and, in all likelihood by Samuel. We may add that Matthew notices Ruth expressly in his genealogy—as if pointing to the memorial that is left of her.

19. I. AND II. SAMUEL.] In entering on this portion of Scripture, it seems proper to remark that, in more than one direct history of the same events, we have a duplicate or triplicate evidence—a concurrence of testimonies for the same subject-matter—besides a certain countenance and authority given by these writers to each other, who thus depone alike to one and the same history. That Samuel himself wrote the greater part of these books, is a general and confident opinion. A scriptural writer he undoubtedly must have been\*—though we are unable precisely to define all the Scriptures which he wrote. “Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.”† We are also told of his employment as a writer in 1 Sam. x. 25.—“Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord.” This last circumstance, by the way, is another scriptural indication of the practice of laying up all the writings, that were to be preserved, in a holy place; and it strengthens the security that we feel in the safe keeping of the canonical Scriptures—the *ἐνδιάθετοι*—laid up in “*arca ecclesiastica*,” ἐν τῇ κιβωτῷ τῆς διαθήκης, in “*armario synagogæ*.” Certain it is, at all events, that we have very many confirmations of these books of Samuel in other Scriptures. “Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house,” 1 Sam. ii. 31. “So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord; that he might fulfil the word of the Lord, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh,” 1 Kings ii. 27.—“Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations,” 1 Sam. viii. 5. “I will be thy king; where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges, of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath,” Hosea xiii. 10, 11. “And afterward they desired a king, and God gave unto them Saul,” Acts xiii. 21.—“So the

\* Acts iii. 24.

† 1 Chr. xxix. 29.



priest gave him hallowed bread : for there was no bread there but the show-bread that was taken from before the Lord," 1 Sam. xxi. 6. " But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungered, and they that were with him ; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?" Matt. xii. 3, 4. —" And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there, and said, The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place, Baal-perazim," 2 Sam. v. 20. " For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work ; and bring to pass his act, his strange act," Isa. xxviii. 21. We can dispose of the profusion of these testimonies in no other way, than by pointing out the places where so many of the remainder are to be found in a note below.\*

20. I. AND II. KINGS.] We may here observe, that still more remarkably than with the pieces which we have just quitted, we have now the benefit of a multiple testimony, both for the contents of the books on which we are entering ; and so by implication, for the books themselves. We have not only the corroboration of other books, such as the two of Chronicles and Second Samuel ; but we have other historical witnesses in those speakers or writers of other times, who gave summaries of the Jewish story—as the prayer of the ninth chapter of Nehemiah—several

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| * 1 Sam. i. 11.—Judg. xiii. 5. | 2 Sam. v. 13.—1 Chr. iii. 9.    | 2 Sam. viii. 18.—1 Ch. xviii. 17. |
| ii. 8.—Ps. cxiii. 7.           | v. 14. iii. 5.                  | xi. 1. xx. 1.                     |
| vii. 3 —Matt. iv. 10.          | v. 17. xi. 6.                   | xii. 24.—Matt. i. 6.              |
| Luke iv. 8.                    | xiv. 8.                         | 1 Chr. xxii. 9.                   |
| ix. 1.—1 Chr. viii. 33.        | v. 21. xiv. 12.                 | xii. 30. xx. 2.                   |
| ix. 15, &c.—Acts xiii. 21.     | vi. 2. xiii. 5, 6.              | xix. 16.—1 Kings ii. 8.           |
| xv. 22.—Hos. vi. 6.            | vi. 6. xiii. 9.                 | xxi. 18.—1 Chr. xx. 4.            |
| Matt. ix. 13.                  | vi. 12. xv. 25.                 | xxi. 19. xx. 5.                   |
| xii. 7.                        | vi. 18. xvi. 2.                 | xxii. 2, &c.—Ps. xviii. 2, &c.    |
| xvi. 11.—2 Sam. vii. 8.        | vii. 1. xvii. 1, &c.            | xxii. 50.—Rom. xv. 9.             |
| Ps. lxxviii. 70.               | vii. 2-13.—1 Kings viii. 15-26. | xxiii. 8-11.—1 Chr. xi. 11.       |
| xxv. 44.—2 Sam. iii. 14, 15.   | vii. 7.—1 Chr. xvii. 6.         | xi. 12.                           |
| xxix. 4.—1 Chr. xii. 19.       | vii. 8.—Ps. lxxviii. 70.        | xi. 27.                           |
| xxxi. 13.—2 Sam. ii. 4.        | vii. 12.—1 Kings ii. 1.         | xxiii. 18. xi. 20.                |
| 2 Sam. i. 14.—Ps. cv. 15.      | vii. 13. v. 5.                  | xxiii. 21. xi. 23.                |
| i. 20.—Mic. i. 10.             | vi. 12.                         | xxiii. 25. xi. 27.                |
| iii. 27.—1 Kings ii. 5.        | 1 Chr. xxii. 10.                | xxiv. 1. xxi. 1.                  |
| v. 1.—1 Chr. xi. 1.            | vii. 14.—Heb. i. 5.             |                                   |
| v. 2.—Ps. lxxviii. 71.         | Ps. lxxxix. 30-32.              |                                   |

historical psalms, the 78th, the 105th, and 106th—the long speech of Stephen, in the 7th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; and of Paul in the 13th chapter—besides the enumeration of Old Testament worthies, which he gives in the 11th chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews. It is true, that we are uncertain of the precise authors for all the precise portions of the historical books in the Old Testament. We are unable to make such a distribution as this; but we know that there was no lack either of writers or inspired men, and at opportune times, for all the scriptural compositions which have come down to us. The character indeed of these compositions rests, not on our knowledge of their secondary or human authors; but on our knowledge of their Divine authorship, as attested—by the general estimation in which they were held among the Jews—by the virtual consent to this of Christ and His apostles, who would have made it known to their disciples, if they had thought the estimation extravagant or false—by the direct attestations given to these writings in certain parts of the Old, and more especially in the New Testament—by the agreement of Jews and Christians in this matter—and by all the general arguments which we have brought to bear on the question of the canonical authority of the Jewish Scriptures. As to the abundance of qualified penmen in those days, though we cannot point to the definite contributions of each or any of them—yet we know generally of their existence in the tribe of Levi, and schools of the prophets; and, individually, even the names of some of them. We have Samuel who did, as we have already seen, write memoirs; and had the highest place and character of his day in Israel; and is ranked by succeeding writers with the greatest worthies of the nation. “Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them,” Ps. xcix. 6. “Though Moses and Samuel stood before me,” Jer. xv. 1. “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel,” Acts iii. 24. “He gave judges until Samuel the prophet,” Acts xiii. 20. “Time would fail to tell of David and Samuel and the prophets,” Heb. xi. 32.—And then we have Nathan the seer, and Gad the seer, both of them recorded in 1 Chron. xxix. 29, as the writers of national history.\* And we have Solomon.—And we have Ezra.—And we

\* In 1 Chron. xxix. 29, there occur the names of no less than three Jewish historians, two of which do not appear in the titles of any of our sacred books. There are a good many other instances besides—as in 2 Chr. xii. 15; xiii. 22; xx. 34; xxvi. 22, where Isaiah is specified as one

have transcribers as well as original writers—for instance, the men whom Hezekiah employed to copy out the Proverbs of Solomon. In short, we have no want of a sufficient human agency to account for all the compositions which have come down to us. For the character of these we must examine the evidence in regard to their nature and quality *viewed as products*—which may be altogether independent of our knowledge in regard to the names of the men who were used instrumentally in the production of them. It is evident, from 1 Kings viii. 8 and ix. 21, that at least certain parts of these compositions must have been written during the currency of the kingdom of Judea, or prior to the captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. The intimate connexion of these books with others in Scripture, as with the Chronicles, and the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, speaks strongly for their own rank and authority as canonical writings. But we have more particular and express evidence for this in such quotations as the following:—“And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions,” &c., 1 Kings x. 1, &c. “The queen of the south came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon,” Matt. xii. 42. —“And behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar! thus saith the Lord, Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee,” 1 Kings xiii. 1, 2. “And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burnt them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord, which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words,” 2 Kings xxiii. 16.—“And Elijah the Tishbite said unto Ahab,

of the writers of Jewish history; and xxxiii. 19, where mention is made of the written sayings of the seers. There is reference made also to what undoubtedly were other than scriptural books, as the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, as in 1 Kings xiv. 19. There is reason to believe that there were chronological and political histories, diverse from those now extant in our Bibles, yet valuable documents notwithstanding. In as far as they are referred to in Scripture, they must be regarded as at least true narratives of the history for which they are quoted; and they seem to have been thus referred to in 1 Kings xv. 7; 2 Chron. xvi. 11; xxiv. 27; xxv. 26; xxvii. 7; xxviii. 26; xxxii. 32; xxxv. 27. These seem to have been more ample records than those which have been actually transmitted to us.



As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word," 1 Kings xvii. 1. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit," James v. 17, 18. But far the most illustrious testimony, and by which the character of "Scripture" is most distinctly and expressly given to the book of Kings is the following—"The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away." "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him," 1 Kings xix. 10, 18. "Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life? But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal," Rom. xi. 2-4.—"And his flesh (Naaman's) came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean," 2 Kings v. 14. "And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian," Luke iv. 27.—"Then Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to war; and they besieged Ahaz; but could not overcome him," 2 Kings xvi. 5. "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up towards Jerusalem, to war against it, but could not prevail against it," Isaiah vii. 1.\*

\* See further—

1 Kings ii. 10.—Acts ii. 29.	1 Kings vii. 21.—2 Chr. iii. 17.	1 Kings ix. 5.—1 Chr. xxii. 10.
xiii. 36.	iv. 3.	ix 7.—Jer. vii. 14.
ii. 11.—1 Chr. xxix. 26, 27.	v. 2.	ix. 8.                  xxii. 8.
ii. 12.                          xxix. 23.	vi. 1.	ix. 10.—2 Chr. viii. 1.
ii. 46.—2 Chr. i. 1.	viii. 22.	ix. 24.                  viii. 11.
iii. 9.                          i. 10.	viii. 46.	vi. 36.                  x. 1.                  ix. 1, &c.
iv. 26.                          ix. 25.	Eccl. vii. 20.	Luke xi. 31.
v. 2.                          ii. 3.	1 John i. 8, 10.	x. 12.—2 Chr. ix. 10.
v. 5.—1 Chr. xxii. 10.	viii. 62.—2 Chr. vii. 4.	xi. 26.                  xiii. 6.
vi. 1.—2 Chr. iii. 1.	viii. 64.	vii. 7.                  xi. 42.                  ix. 30.
vi. 12.—1 Chr. xxii. 10-13.	ix. 1.	vii. 11.                  xi. 43.—Matt. i. 7.

21. I. & II. CHRONICLES.] There are frequent references in the two last and two present books to certain books of Kings and certain books of Chronicles; but, in many instances, there is the certainty of these not being the very books that we have in Scripture, and therefore other annals which, however valuable, were not admitted into the canon. It is thought by some, however, that there is a reference to our Scripture Chronicles in Neh. xii. 23. It is most likely that there may have been copious annals of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah which have now perished. There was, at the Jewish court, the special office of a recorder, as appears from 2 Sam. viii. 16; 1 Kings iv. 3; 2 Kings xviii. 18; 1 Chron. xviii. 15. Amid the uncertainties which obtain, as to the precise writers of the Chronicles in the Bible, it may be stated, as one argument for the common opinion of Ezra having written the greater part of them—that the last verses of the Second Book of Chronicles and the first verses of the Book of Ezra are identical. Still parts of the compilation must have been written during the subsistence of the Jewish kingdom, as is obvious from 2 Chron. v. 9; viii. 8; x. 19, and xxi. 10. That they had the canonical rank of Scriptures, and were admitted to that ark in the temple from which the Apocry-

1 Kings xii. 1.—2 Chr. x. 1.	2 Kings xi 1.—2 Chr. xxii. 10.	2 Kings xxi. 1.—2 Chr. xxxiii. 1.
xii. 22.	xi. 2.	xi. 4.
xiv. 10.—2 Kings ix. 8.	xii. 1.	xxiii. 1.
xiv. 21.—2 Chr. xii. 13.	xiv. 1.	xxiv. 1.
xv. 1.	xiii. 1.	xxv. 1.
xv. 7.	xiii. 3.	xiv. 6.—Ezek. xviii. 20
xv. 8.	xiv. 1.	xiv. 19.—2 Chr. xxv. 27.
xv. 13.	xv. 16.	xiv. 21.
xv. 17.	xvi. 1, &c.	xiv. 25.—Jonah i. 1.
xv. 18.	xvi. 2.	xv. 10.—Amos vii. 9.
xv. 24.—Matt. i. 8.	xv. 13.—Matt. i. 8, 9.	xv. 19.—1 Chr. v. 26, 27.
xvii. 1.—Luke iv. 25.	xvi. 1.—2 Chr. xxviii. 1, &c.	xvi. 1.—2 Chr. xxviii. 1, &c.
xvii. 9.	iv. 26.	xvii. 33.—Zeph. i. 5.
xix. 16.—2 Kings ix. 1-3.	xviii. 1.—2 Chr. xxviii. 27.	xviii. 1.—2 Chr. xxviii. 27.
Luke iv. 27.	xxix. 1.	xxix. 1.
xxi. 21.—2 Kings ix. 8.	Matt. i. 9	xxiii. 34.—Matt. i. 11.
xxi. 23.	ix. 36.	xxiv. 10.—Dan. i. 1.
xxii. 2.—2 Chr. xviii. 2, &c.	xviii. 13.—2 Chr. xxxii. 1.	xxiv. 13.—Is. xxxix. 6.
xxii. 4.—2 Kings iii. 7.	xviii. 13.—Is. xxxvi. 1.	xxiv. 15.—2 Chr. xxxvi. 10.
xxii. 41.—2 Chr. xx. 31.	xix. 1.	xxiv. 17.—Jer. xxxvii. 1.
2 Kings i. 10-12.—Luke ix. 54.	xix. 35.	xxiv. 18.
iv. 1-8.	xx. 1.—2 Chr. xxxii. 24.	xxv. 1.
iv. 25, 26.	Is. xxxviii. 1.	xxv. 3.
vi. 16.—2 Chr. xxxii. 7.	xx. 11.	xxv. 13.
viii. 16.	xx. 12.	xxv. 17.
viii. 24.	xx. 17.—Jer. xxvii. 22.	xxv. 22.
		xxv. 23.
		xxv. 26.
		xxvi. 1.
		xxvii. 22.
		xxviii. 1.
		xxix. 1.
		xxx. 1.
		xxxi. 1.
		xxxii. 1.
		xxxiii. 1.
		xxxiv. 1.
		xxxv. 1.
		xxxvi. 1.
		xxxvii. 1.
		xxxviii. 1.
		xxxix. 1.
		xl. 1.
		xli. 1, 2.

pha were excluded, is argued—from the use made of them in the genealogies of Matthew and Luke—from the general reasons already adduced in which they fully participate—and from the multitude of scriptural references which are made to them, of which we now offer a few specimens. “Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite,” 1 Chron. xxi. 18. “Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite,” 2 Chron. iii. 1.—“Josiah came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died: and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah,” 2 Chron. xxxv. 22-24. “In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon,” Zech. xii. 11.—“And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy,” 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. “From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even unto this day (that is, the three-and-twentieth year), the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened. And the Lord hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear,” Jer. xxv. 3, 4. “I have also sent unto you all the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me,” Jer. xxxv. 15.—“To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years,” 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. “These nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord,” Jer. xxv. 11, 12. “For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good



word towards you, in causing you to return to this place," Jer. xxix. 10. It is obvious that the prophets, who lived prior to the captivity must supply a good many references to these historical books; and, in regard to the likely authors of them, let it be observed once more, that Samuel and some of the prophets, in Acts iii. 24, must have had a hand in their composition. Certain it is of Samuel, that no prophetic book, in the common sense of that term, has been transmitted by him; and where then can he have spoken of the days of the New Testament? Surely whatever is referred to as spoken by one so ancient, must have been written by him also—else it would have perished from the memory of the nation. They who were charged by the Saviour as slow in heart, for not believing all that the prophets had spoken, were culpable in this—that they had not attended to that which was written; and, to repair this defect, did our Saviour expound all which was "written" in Moses, and the Psalms, and the Prophets, concerning himself. In like manner that which was spoken by Joel (Acts ii. 16), was that which was written by him. That which was spoken of in the prophets (Acts xiii. 40), was that which was written of in them. And Samuel and the prophets that follow after, as many as had spoken, were just as many as had written—proving that Samuel and other inspired men, though we cannot point to the writings severally of each, have, somewhere or other, had their share in the writings of the Old Testament.\*

\* See further—

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| 1 Chr. i. 24.—Luke iii. 36. | 1 Chr. xxviii. 4.—Ps. lxxviii. 68. | 2 Chr. vi. 32.—John xii. 20.    |
| ii. 4.—Matt. i. 3.          | xxviii. 6.—2 Chr. i. 9.            | Acts viii. 27.                  |
| ii. 9. i. 3.                | xxix. 11.—Matt. vi. 13.            | vi. 36.—Prov. xx. 29.           |
| iii. 16, 17. i. 11, 12.     | 1 Tim. i. 17.                      | Eccl. vii. 20.                  |
| v. 2.—Micah v. 2.           | Rev. v. 13.                        | James iii. 2.                   |
| Matt. ii. 6.                | xxix. 15.—Ps. xxxix. 12.           | 1 John i. 8.                    |
| vi. 14.—Neh. xi. 11.        | 1 Heb. xi. 13.                     | vi. 41.—Ps. cxxii. 8, 9.        |
| xvi. 8.—Ps. cv. 1, &c.      | 1 Pet. ii. 11.                     | vii. 21.—Jer. xxii. 8, 9.       |
| xvi. 22. cv. 15.            | Ps. xc. 9.                         | ix. 1.—Matt. xii. 42.           |
| xvi. 23. xcvi. 1.           | xxix. 25.—2 Chr. i. 12.            | Luke xi. 31.                    |
| xvi. 34. cvi. 1.            | Eccl. ii. 9.                       | xx. 20.—Isa. vii. 9.            |
| cvi. 1.                     | 2 Chr. i. 12. ii. 9.               | xxi. 7.—Ps. cxxxii. 11.         |
| cxviii. 1.                  | iii. 14.—Matt. xxvii. 51.          | xxxii. 1, &c.—Is. xxxvi. 1, &c. |
| cxxxvi. 1.                  | iii. 15.—Jer. lii. 21.             | xxxii. 8.—Jer. xvii. 5.         |
| xviii. 8.—2 Chr. iv. 15.    | v. 13.—Ps. cxxxvi.                 | xxxii. 24.—Is. xxxviii. 1.      |
| xxi. 30. i. 3.              | vi. 16. cxxxii. 12.                | xxxiii. 7.—Ps. cxxxii. 14.      |
| xxiii. 6. viii. 14.         | vi. 18.—Isa. lxvi. 1.              | xxxvi. 22.—Ezra i. 1.           |
| xxix. 25.                   | Acts vii. 49.                      | Jer. xxv. 12, 13.               |
| xxiii. 13.—Heb. v. 4        | xvii. 24.                          | xxxix. 10.                      |

22. EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.\*] These two books anciently composed one volume. Ezra was a ready scribe in the law of Moses; and, by the universal consent of antiquity, acted the part of an inspired editor of all the Jewish Scriptures that were extant in his time. That he was the author of the Book of Ezra, is collected from the frequent occurrence of his name in the first person. "God hath extended mercy unto me before the king; and I was strengthened," Ezra vii. 27, 28. "And at the evening sacrifice, I arose up from my heaviness; and I fell upon my knees," Ezra ix. 5. The prayer is in the first person; and when ended, the narrative is resumed of Ezra in the third person (Ezra x. 1). He uses the first person also in chap. viii. 15, &c. The canonical authority of this book is argued from its unexcepted place in all the ancient catalogues—from the implication of it with the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah—and from the illustration which it sheds on the prophecies of both. Compare particularly the first chapter of Haggai, and the third and fourth of Zechariah, with the fifth chapter of Ezra. And there are other scriptural references besides in favour both of this book and that of Nehemiah. "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is at Judah," Ezra i. 2. "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid," Isa. xlv. 28. "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him," Isa. xlv. 1. "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways," Isa. xlv. 13.—"Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them," Ezra v. 1. "In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the Lord, by Haggai the prophet, unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying," Haggai i. 1. "In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of

\* We might remark, in passing, a monumental evidence for the books both of Ezra and Daniel, in the tinge or mixture of the Chaldaic with the Hebrew in their composition.

the Lord unto Zechariah the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying," Zech. i. 1.\*

23. ESTHER.] This book is by many ascribed to Mordecai; and he must certainly have been the original writer of at least some of its contents. See Esther ix. 20, 27. Its being said that he "wrote these things," may possibly be an ascription of the whole book, or at least the greater part of it, to him. We have no very satisfactory or decisive references to this book from other parts of Scripture. Its canonical authority rests on the circumstance of its having been canonized by the Jews, and by many of the Christian Fathers, as well as the Council of Laodicea. We cannot assign for it much of that particular evidence, which we have been employed in accumulating for the benefit of all the books which go before it. But it shares with them in the general arguments adduced at the beginning of this chapter—to which might be added the certain chaste and simple dignity, which is characteristic of all the canonical writings; and by which they stand remarkably contrasted with the legendary and untasteful style that often breaks forth in the writings even of the best of the Apocryphists.

24. JOB.] We now enter on the books called poetical—all of which, along with certain others, are ranked by the Jews among the Hagiographa. Should any be led by this to imagine a lower degree of inspiration for these books—then to countervail this injury, it is certain that in favour of most of them, we have the greatest amount of scriptural, which, we repute, is the greatest amount of the best sort of evidence. The depositions of the New Testament to the Psalms, and the prophecies of Daniel, are greatly more than a counterpoise to any mischief which might be apprehended for certain of the Old Testament Scriptures, from the fanciful distinctions of the later Hebrews—a distinction, after all, that proceeds more on some imaginary difference in the mode of inspiration, than on any difference in the qualities of the products—the properties of absolute authority and

\* See further—

Ezra i. 1.—Jer. xxv. 12.	Ezra ii. 18.—Neh. vii. 24.	Ezra iii. 2.—Hag. i. 1.
xxix. 10.	ii. 20. vii. 25.	Matt. i. 12.
ii. 1.—Neh. vii. 6.	ii. 24. vii. 28.	Luke iii. 27.
ii. 2. vii. 7.	ii. 40. vii. 43.	vii. 14.—Esther i. 14.
ii. 6. vii. 11.	ii. 55. vii. 57.	Neh. ix. 29.—Rom. x. 5.
ii. 10. vii. 15.	ii. 57. vii. 59.	Gal. iii. 12.



trueness being ascribed without exception by the Jews to one and all of their Scriptures. And we are not to conceive, because the interval between Esther and Isaiah in our Bible is filled up by the books called poetical, that these comprise all the sacred poetry to be found in the Old Testament. The fifteenth chapter of Exodus—the song of Moses in Deuteronomy, and of Deborah and Hannah in the Books of Judges and Samuel—the lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan, with those other effusions of his in the seventh chapter of Second Samuel, and the sixteenth of First Chronicles—beside the many enrapt compositions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah, Habakkuk, and others—are all in the strain and spirit of highest poetry. That such a mode of composition is not inconsistent with the purposes of revelation, is obvious from the repeated sanctions given in Scripture both to music and poetry—as in the service of the temple—and even in the New Testament, where we are recommended to the use of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; and thus to make melody in our hearts to the Lord. The Book of Job, however, is the first of those books, in the order of our Bible, to the whole of which the designation of poetical is given. His character as an inspired man seems to be decisively attested both by Ezekiel and James—particularly the former, when he ranks him with the patriarch Noah and the prophet Daniel. “Though these three men—Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God,” Ezekiel xiv. 14, and again in verse 20. “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord,” James v. 11—a testimony which seems to establish the literal truth of the history, in opposition to those who conceive it to be a mere dramatic representation. But whatever uncertainties may attach to the man, it is enough for our purpose that we have evidence for the book. And, beside the ex-scriptural evidence, which it shares in equally with all the others, there is enough to establish the canonical authority of the Book of Job, in the testimonies of the sacred writers. Of these, the one we should single out as the most distinct and decisive, is that by Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. “He taketh the wise in their own craftiness,” Job v. 13. “For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness,” 1 Cor. iii. 19. St. Paul tells us of this passage that “it is written;” or, which is tantamount to this, that “we have it in Scripture”—

thus making the Book of Job, from which the quotation is taken, part and parcel of Scripture.\*

25. PSALMS.] The fulness of the evidence becomes now oppressive to him who has undertaken the office, at once to exhibit and condense it. Never were the existence, and the contents, and even in some instances the order and arrangement of any ancient book more decisively established by the testimony of succeeding books, than is this collection of sacred poems by the various writers of the New Testament—and that, by numerous undoubted citations, often accompanied with an express statement, both of the work from whence they have been taken, and of the author of the work. One cannot doubt, from the frequent use of these compositions in the service of the temple, of the frequent multiplication of their copies (to be found, therefore in many hands) from the autograph that was deposited there. We have already, in § 9, given a few instances of the recognition of the Psalms by Christ and His apostles; but we crave the indulgence of our readers, if both in this book and in that of Isaiah, we shall present a more copious collection of these, than some perhaps may have the patience to examine. “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed,” Psalm ii. 1, 2. “Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The

\* See further—

Job i. 7.—1 Pet. v. 8.  
i. 21.—Ecc. v. 15.  
1 Tim. vi. 7.  
iii. 3.—Jer. xx. 14.  
iv. 8.—Prov. xxii. 8.  
Hos. x. 13.  
iv. 9.—Isa. xxx. 33.  
v. 12.—Ps. xxxiii. 10.  
v. 14.—Deut. xxviii. 29.  
v. 16.—Ps. cvii. 42.  
v. 17.—Prov. iii. 12.  
Heb. xii. 5.  
v. 18.—1 Sam. ii. 6.  
Hos. vi. 1.  
vi. 4.—Ps. xxxviii. 2.  
vii. 17.—Ps. viii. 4.  
cxliv. 3.  
viii. 9.—1 Chr. xxix. 15.  
Ps. cxliv. 4.

Job viii. 13.—Prov. x. 28.  
ix. 9.—Amos v. 8.  
xiii. 26.—Ps. xxv. 7.  
xiv. 4. li. 5.  
xiv. 16. cxxxix. 2, 3.  
xv. 8.—Rom. xi. 34.  
xv. 35.—Ps. vii. 14.  
Isa. lix. 4.  
xix. 19.—Ps. xli. 9.  
lv. 13, 14.  
xix. 29.—Rom. xiii. 4.  
xxi.—Ps. lxxiv.  
xxi. 5.—Mic. vii. 16.  
xxi. 30.—Prov. xvi. 4.  
xxii. 19.—Ps. cvii. 42.  
xxii. 29.—James iv. 10.  
1 Pet. v. 6.  
xxvi. 6.—Prov. xv. 11.  
xxvii. 8.—Matt. xvi. 26.

Job xxvii. 15.—Ps. lxxviii. 64.  
xxviii. 15.—Prov. iii. 13, 14.  
viii. 10, 11, 19.  
xvi. 16.  
xxviii. 28.—Ps. cxi. 10.  
Prov. i. 7; ix. 10.  
xxx. 9.—Ps. lxix. 12.  
xxx. 25. xxxv. 13.  
xxxii. 6.—Prov. v. 21.  
xxxiii. 20.—Ps. cvii. 18.  
xxxv. 7. xvi. 2.  
Rom. xi. 35.  
xxxvi. 11, 12.—Is. i. 19, 20.  
xxxviii. 4.—Ps. civ. 5.  
xxxviii. 10.—Prov. viii. 29.  
xxxviii. 41.—Ps. cxlvii. 9.  
Matt. vi. 26  
xxxix. 30. xxiv. 28  
Luke xvii. 3

kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord, and against his Christ," Acts iv. 25, 26. —"Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession," Ps. ii. 7, 8. "As it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5. —"Their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue," Psalm v. 9. "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit," Rom. iii. 13. —"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength," Psalm viii. 2. "And Jesus saith unto them, Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Matt. xxi. 16. —"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands," Ps. viii. 4, 5, 6. "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands," Heb. ii. 6, 7. —"Thou hast put all things under his feet," Psalm viii. 6. "For he hath put all things under his feet," 1 Cor. xv. 27. "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet," Heb. ii. 8. —"His mouth is full of cursing and deceit," Psalm x. 7. "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness," Rom. iii. 14. —"They are all gone aside; they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one," Psalm xiv. 3. "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one," Rom. iii. 12. —"I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope: for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption," &c., Psalm xvi. 8-10, &c. "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope; because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," &c., Acts ii.



25-27, &c.—“Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name,” Psalm xviii. 49. “As it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name,” Rom. xv. 9. —“They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture, Psalm xxii. 18.—“That the Scripture might be fulfilled which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots,” John xix. 24.—“I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee,” Psalm xxii. 22. “Saying, I (Jesus) will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee,” Heb. ii. 12.—“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile,” Psalm xxxii. 1, 2. “Even as David also describeth, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin,” Rom. iv. 6-8.—“There is no fear of God before their eyes,” Psalm xxxvi. 1. “It is written, There is no fear of God before their eyes,” Rom. iii. 10, 18.—“Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God,” Ps. xl. 6-8. “Wherefore, he (Christ) saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared for me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God,” Heb. x. 5-7.—“Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me,” Psalm xli. 9. “That the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me,” John xiii. 18.—“Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter,” Psalm xlv. 22. “As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter,” Rom. viii. 36.—“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows,” Psalm xlv. 6, 7. “He (God) saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy king-

dom : thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity : therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows," Heb. i. 8, 9.—"Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men," Psalm lxxviii. 18. "Wherefore he (Christ) saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men," Eph. iv. 8.—"For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up ; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me," Psalm lxxix. 9. "And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," John ii. 17. "As it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me," Rom. xv. 3.—"In my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink," Psalm lxxix. 21. "Jesus, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst ; and they filled a sponge with vinegar," John xix. 28, 29.—"Let their table become a snare before them ; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened that they see not ; and make their loins continually to shake," Psalm lxxix. 22, 23. "And David saith, Let their table be made a snare and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense unto them : let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back alway," Rom. xi. 9, 10.—"Let their habitation be desolate ; and let none dwell in their tents," Psalm lxxix. 25. "For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein," Acts i. 20.—"I will open my mouth in a parable ; I will utter dark sayings of old," Psalm lxxviii. 2. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables ; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world," Matt. xiii. 35.—"I have said, Ye are gods," Psalm lxxxii. 6. "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?" John x. 34.—"For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone," Psalm xc. 11, 12. "It is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee : and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone," Matt. iv. 6. See also Luke iv. 10, 11.—"The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man that they are vanity," Ps. xciv. 11. "It is written, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain," 1 Cor. iii. 20.—"To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, and

as in the day of temptation in the wilderness ; when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work," Ps. xcv. 7-9. "As the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness ; when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years," Heb. iii. 7-9. See also Heb. iv. 7.—"Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure ; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end," Ps. cii. 25-27. "He (God) saith, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest ; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment ; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed : but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail," Heb. i. 10-12.—"Who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire," Psalm civ. 4. "And of the angels he (God) saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire," Heb. i. 7. —"They compassed me about also with words of hatred ; and fought against me without a cause," Psalm cix. 3. "But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause," John xv. 25.—"Let another take his office," Psalm cix. 8. "For it is written in the book of Psalms, His bishopric let another take," Acts i. 20.—"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool," Psalm cx. 1. "He (Christ) saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord ? saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool," Matt. xxii. 43, 44. "For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool," Mark xii. 36. "And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool," Luke xx. 42, 43. See also Heb. i. 13.—"Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek," Psalm cx. 4. "As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec," Heb. v. 6. "For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec," Heb. vii. 17.—"He hath dispersed ; he hath given to the poor ; his



righteousness endureth for ever," Psalm cxii. 9. "As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever," 2 Cor. ix. 9.—"I believed, therefore have I spoken," Psalm cxvi. 10. "According as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken," 2 Cor. iv. 13.—"O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people," Psalm cxvii. 1. "It is written, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people." Rom. xv. 11.—"The stone which the builders refused is became the head-stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes," Psalm cxviii. 22, 23. "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" Matt. xxi. 42. See also Mark xii. 10, 11; Luke xx. 17.—"The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it: Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne," Psalm cxxxii. 11. "Therefore (David) being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne," Acts ii. 30.—"Adder's poison is under their lips," Psalm cxl. 3. "It is written, The poison of asps is under their lips," Rom. iii. 13.\*

\* See further—

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| Ps. i. 3.—Jer. xvii. 8.    | Ps. xxiv. 1.—1 Cor. x. 26, 28. | Ps. lxix. 21.—Matt. xxvii. 48. |
| ii. 9.—Rev. ii. 27.        | xxiv. 4.—Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16.  | Mark xv. 23.                   |
| xii. 5.                    | xxv. 2.—Rom. x. 11.            | John xix. 29.                  |
| vi. 8.—Matt. vii. 23.      | xxviii. 3.—Jer. ix. 8.         | lxxviii. 15.—1 Cor. x. 4.      |
| Luke xiii. 27.             | xxxi. 5.—Luke xxiii. 46.       | lxxviii. 24.—John vi. 31.      |
| xi. 4.—Hab. ii. 20.        | xxxii. 19.—Isa. lxiv. 4.       | lxxix. 6.—Jer. x. 25.          |
| xii. 6.—Prov. xxx. 5.      | 1 Cor. ii. 9.                  | lxxxii. 12.—Acts xiv. 16       |
| xv. 2.—Isa. xxxiii. 15.    | xxxii. 5.—1 John i. 9.         | lxxxix. 20. xiii. 22.          |
| xv. 5.—Ezek. xviii. 8.     | xxxiii. 11.—Prov. xix. 21.     | lxxxix. 36.—Luke i. 33.        |
| xvi. 5.—Lam. iii. 24.      | xxxiii. 18.—1 Pet. iii. 12.    | John xii. 34.                  |
| xvi. 10.—Acts xiii. 35.    | xxxiv. 12. iii. 10.            | xc. 4.—2 Pet. iii. 8.          |
| xix. 4.—Rom. x. 18.        | xxxiv. 15. iii. 12.            | xciv. 9.—Prov. xx. 12.         |
| xxii. 1.—Matt. xxvii. 46.  | xxxv. 5.—Hos. xiii. 3.         | xcvii. 7.—Heb. i. 6.           |
| Mark xv. 34.               | xxxvii. 1.—Prov. xxiv. 1, 19.  | xcviii. 2.—Isa. lii. 10.       |
| xxii. 7.—Matt. xxvii. 39.  | xxxvii. 5. xvi. 3.             | cv. 1.—1 Chr. xvi. 8.          |
| xxii. 16. xxvii. 35.       | 1 Pet. v. 7.                   | Isa. xii. 4.                   |
| Mark xv. 24.               | xxxvii. 11.—Matt. v. 5.        | cv. 9.—Luke i. 73.             |
| Luke xxiii. 33.            | xxxix. 12.—1 Chr. xxix. 15.    | cvii. 35.—Isa. xli. 18.        |
| John xix. 23, 37.          | Heb. xi. 13.                   | cx. 1.—Acts ii. 34.            |
| xxii. 18.—Matt. xxvii. 35. | xl. 6.—Isa. i. 11.             | 1 Cor. xv. 25.                 |
| Mark xv. 24.               | xliv. 4.—Matt. xiii. 35.       | cx. 10.—Prov. i. 7.            |
| Luke xxiii. 34.            | liii. 1.—Rom. iii. 12.         | ix. 10.                        |
| John xix. 23, 34.          | lv. 22.—1 Pet. v. 7.           | cxiii. 3.—Mal. i. 11.          |

26. PROVERBS.] In the direct history of Solomon, we read both of his Proverbs and of his Songs (1 Kings iv. 32). And we are further informed by certain proverbs in this collection, that they were copied out by the men of Hezekiah (Prov. xxv. 1). That Solomon their author received preternatural communications from heaven is affirmed more than once in the history of his life (1 Kings iii. 5 ; ix. 2). His wisdom is adverted to by our Saviour in Matt. xii. 42, when He spake of the queen of Sheba's visit to him. That they were mainly, if not universally, the productions of Solomon, is evident, not from their extrinsic, but what is much stronger, their incorporated title in the first verse of the first chapter—that kind of title which is denominated *ἑγγεγραμμένος*, and of which we have many examples in the books both of the Old and New Testament. When any of the sayings in this Book of Proverbs are alleged in the New Testament, it is not most assuredly according to the manner in which Christ or His apostles would quote a merely human composition—but with the obvious respect due to canonical Scriptures. The following are a few instances :—"For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood," Prov. i. 16. "Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood," Isa. lix. 7. "It is written, Their feet are swift to shed blood," Rom. iii. 15.—"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord ; neither be weary of his correction : for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth," Prov. iii. 11, 12. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation, which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him : for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," Heb. xii. 5, 6.—"Surely he scorneth the scornors : but he giveth grace unto the lowly," Prov. iii. 34. "Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble," James iv. 6.—"Love covereth all sins," Prov. x. 12. "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins," 1 Pet. iv. 8. The following is very distinct and decisive :—"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat ; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink. For thou shalt heap coals

Ps. cxlii. 7.—1 Sam. ii. 8.  
 cxviii. 6.—Heb. xiii. 6.  
 cxviii. 22.—Acts iv. 11.  
     1 Pet. ii. 4.  
 cxviii. 26.—Matt. xxi. 9.

Ps. cxix. 21.—Heb. xi. 13.  
 cxix. 139.—John ii. 17.  
 cxxxii. 8.—2 Chr. vi. 41.  
 cxxxii. 11.—Luke i. 69.

Ps. cxxxix. 12.—Heb. iv. 13.  
 cxliv. 1.—2 Sam. xxii. 35.  
 cxliv. 2.                      xxii. 2, 3  
 cxliv. 3.—Heb. ii. 6.

of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee," Prov. xxv. 21, 22. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves; but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head," Rom. xii. 19, 20.—"As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly," Prov. xxvi. 11. "But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire," 2 Pet. ii. 22.\*

27. ECCLESIASTES.] In regard to the human authorship of this book, though not ascribed to Solomon by name, it is by undoubted designation, and that within the limits of the work itself, which begins with the announcement of its own parentage, as, "The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem." And not by designation only is it fastened upon Solomon—but by designation also applicable to him, and not so applicable to any other of whom we know. "And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs."† And that he was the author of the words as well as of the thoughts—the writer as well as the conceiver of

\* See further—

Prov. i. 24.—Isa. lxx. 12.	Prov. xv. 8.—Jer. vi. 20.	Prov. xx. 22.—1 Pet. iii. 9.
lxvi. 4.	vii. 22.	xxi. 3.—Mic. vi. 7, 8
Jer. vii. 13.	Amos v. 22.	xxi. 22.—Eccl. ix. 14, &c
i. 28.—Isa. i. 15.	xv. 16.—1 Tim. vi. 6.	xxii. 1. vii. 1.
Jer. xi. 11.	xv. 24.—Phil. iii. 20.	xxii. 8.—Hos. x. 13.
xiv. 12.	Col. iii. 1, 2.	xxii. 9.—2 Cor. ix. 6.
Mic. iii. 4.	xvii. 13.—Rom. xii. 17.	xxiii. 29.—Isa. v. 11.
Zech. vii. 13.	1 Thess. v. 15.	xxv. 7.—Luke xiv. 10.
ii. 4.—Matt. xiii. 44.	1 Pet. iii. 9.	xxv. 9.—Matt. v. 25.
ii. 6.—James i. 5.	xvii. 15.—Isa. v. 23.	xviii. 15
iii. 7.—Rom. xii. 16.	xvii. 27.—James i. 19.	xxvii. 1.—James iv. 13, &c.
iii. 9.—Mal. iii. 10.	xix. 10.—Eccl. x. 6, 7.	xxvii. 20.—Eccl. i. 8.
iii. 12.—Rev. iii. 19.	xix. 17.—Matt. x. 42.	xxviii. 13.—1 John i. 9, 10.
iii. 34.—1 Pet. v. 5.	xxv. 40.	xxviii. 20.—1 Tim. vi. 9.
vi. 18.—Rom. iii. 15.	2 Cor. ix. 6, 7.	xxix. 23.—Matt. xxiii. 12.
vi. 25.—Matt. v. 28.	xx. 9.—1 John i. 8.	Luke xiv. 11.
ix. 8. vii. 6.	xx. 20.—Matt. xv. 4.	xxx. 4.—John iii. 13.
xi. 25.—1 Cor. ix. 8-10.	Mark vii. 10.	Isa. xl. 12, &c.
xii. 4. xi. 7.	xx. 22.—Rom. xii. 17.	xxx. 6.—Rev. xxii. 18, 19.
xv. 8.—Isa. i. 11.	1 Thess. v. 15.	xxx. 9.—Matt. vi. 11.

† Eccl. xii. 9. See of his wisdom and works in the direct history; 1 Kings iii. 12; iv. 29, 32; x. 1, &c.



this book—seems very obvious from chap. xii. 10. This does not exclude, however, the idea of an amanuensis, which detracts not in the least from the full authorship—any more than it does from the authorship of Paul, that he did not write manually every word of his epistles.\* We have the general consent both of Jews and Christians for the canonical authority of this book; and though we can allege no express quotation from it in the other Scriptures—yet such are the resemblances, if not the references, which might be found in it, that, from within the work itself, we can offer some things to confirm, while there is nothing to discredit the external testimony. The following is the only instance that we shall produce in the text:—"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil," Eccl. xii. 14. "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. v. 10. "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel," Rom. ii. 16.†

28. SONG OF SOLOMON.] We read of the songs of Solomon in 1 Kings iv. 32. The internal evidence against the canonical authority of this book has been regarded by many to be so strong as to outweigh the external testimony which might be adduced in its favour. But, if the discredit grounded on the nature of its contents can be removed, this should restore to their full and proper force the outward credentials—consisting of the ex-scriptural testimonies; and of all those general arguments that might be founded on the undoubted place which, along with the other books, it has ever held in the canon of the Old Testament. The great repugnance that is felt towards the acknowledgment of its scriptural rank, arises from the imagery employed in it, which appears to many incongruous with those mutual regards between Christ and His church, that form, in the apprehension of the orthodox, the great subject of this work.

\* He seems to have written with his own hand the whole Epistle to the Galatians—Gal. vi. 11.—but not so the Romans—Rom. xvi. 22—though he assumes, and rightly, the sole authorship of the epistle. See Rom. i. 1, &c.; ix. 1, &c.; x. 1, &c.; xv. 14, 24.

† See further—  
 Eccl. vii. 20.—1 John i. 8. Eccl. xi. 9.—1 Cor. iv. 5.  
 Eccl. i. 8.—Rom. viii. 20. 22. x. 20.—Rom. xiii. 2. 2 Cor. v. 10.  
 v. 2.—Matt. vi. 7. xi. 1.—Matt. x. 42. xii. 11.—John x. 11, 14.  
 v. 15.—1 Tim. vi. 7. 2 Cor. ix. 9, 10. kii. 14.—Rom. x. v. 10.  
 vii. 3.—2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. xi. 5.—John iii. 8.

But the very same imagery, it should be recollected, is employed, and for the very same purpose, by the most undoubted of our scriptural writers, and in the first and foremost of our scriptural books. To present one example out of those which occur in the Old Testament, we have the prophet Isaiah saying, "Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill," Isa. v. 1. See further, Isa. lxi. 10; lxii. 5; Jer. ii. 2; Ezek. xvi. 8; Hos. ii. 19, 20; Matt. ix. 15; xxii. 2, &c.; xxv. 1, &c.; John iii. 29. But even the New Testament, more didactic and less poetical as it is conceived to be, abundantly exemplifies the style and form of representation that have been so much objected to in this part of Scripture. The affection of Christ for the church is doctrinally and without a figure set forth in Acts xx. 28, where the measure of His love may be estimated by the price which He gave for it, having "purchased it with his own blood." This forms the commencement of a new relation, we are told in Rom. vii. 4, between the sinner who is redeemed and the Saviour who has thus redeemed him. Raised by Him from death, we are married to Christ, "that we should bring forth fruit unto God." The image is repeated by the apostle in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, xi. 2: "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." And the preparation for our full enjoyment of Him in heaven, is our investiture here in all the graces of moral and spiritual excellence; and accordingly, the great work of Jesus Christ as the Lord our strength and our sanctifier, is to make us meet for that inheritance, whereof the Spirit is said to be the earnest.\* This is followed up by a more full development of the image, in Eph. v. 25-32—which imagery is not only sustained by Paul throughout the preparation for union with Christ here; but is employed by John, when he sets forth the completion of it in heaven—where a glorious and immortal festival awaits all those "who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb."† Our business here is to be diligent, that we may be found without spot and blameless in the great day of reckoning. This we are enabled to prosecute through Christ helping us, who prepares His disciples for Himself, "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." When this is accomplished, He may say, in the language of the Canticles, "Thou art fair, there is no spot in thee," Song iv. 7. It is

\* Eph i 14; iv. 30

† Rev. xix. 7-9; xx. 1, 2.

thus that we have scriptural authority, if not for the positive confirmation of the title of this work to a place in the canon, at least for the removal of the objections against it. We admit that it has not much more of affirmative evidence to rest upon, than the historical fact of its reception by the Jewish and Christian churches—coupled, however, with the uniform testimony of Christ and His apostles on the side of “Scripture,” whereof this work formed part and parcel in their time. With the exception perhaps of one passage in the New Testament, the Second Book of Kings would have scarcely had any other than the same grounds to rest upon—yet in that passage it is at once quoted as Scripture, and thus has its scriptural place and authority conclusively stamped upon it. The Song of Solomon has not the benefit of any reference so distinct and peculiar as this; but the strong circumstance—both in its favour, and in that of all other books which held occupancy in the Hebrew Scriptures of that day, is—that Christ and His apostles, in their repeated notices of the whole collection, under this their received and understood title, never complains of any unlicensed intrusion, made by any work among the sacred writings of their countrymen. Yet neither are we altogether destitute of scriptural evidence on this subject, as we have made out to a certain extent already, and of which we offer a few additional examples below.\* By the general consent of the Jewish and Christian churches, this work has a place in the canon. And there are not wanting examples, in the history of the Church, of those pure in heart, those lofty and accomplished disciples in the school of spiritual and experimental religion, as St. Bernard and Thomas Aquinas, who have rejoiced in the preciousness of this Scripture, and inhaled the very atmosphere of heaven, without one taint of the base or the unholy, while they luxuriated over its pages. “Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled,” Tit. i. 15. For the interesting subject of the relation in which the external stands to the internal evidence, on the question of the canon or the inspiration of any book, we would refer our readers to a succeeding chapter.

\* Cant. i. 4.—John vi. 44.

iv. 7.—Eph. v. 27.

Cant. v. 1.—Rev. iii. 20.

v. 2.—Rev. iii. 20.

Many more similar quotations might be given—but these will account for the fact, why not only our most spiritual men, but those who are best acquainted with Scripture in general, are most reconciled and most attached to the Song of Solomon in particular.



29. Before entering in detail on the prophetic books—it may be right to exhibit a few of the scriptural testimonies for the existence of such works in the general, and the respect in which they were held. “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets,” Matt. ii. 23. “We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write,” John i. 45—thus ascribing to the prophets an authority co-ordinate with that of Moses. “As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began,” Luke i. 70. “All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished,” Luke xviii. 31. “Which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began,” Acts iii. 21. “Yea, and all the prophets have likewise foretold of these days,” Acts iii. 24. “Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures,” Rom. i. 2. “God, . . . at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,” Heb. i. 1. We forbear to multiply instances in proof of a thing so palpable, as that there existed a collection of prophetical writings in the days of our Saviour, in favour of which we have the joint testimony both of Jews and Christians, accompanied by the frequent appeals both of Christ and His apostles.

30. ISAIAH.] This most illustrious of the Old Testament prophets seems to have been honoured in the days of our Saviour, with a separate volume for his own compositions (see Luke iv. 17). Their human authorship is clearly assigned to him—and that, not by an external but by an incorporated title (Isa. i. 1; see also ii. 1; xiii. 1; xx. 2; xxx. 8, &c.) He speaks throughout repeatedly in his own person, as in vi. 1, which passage decides also the chronology of this prophet—a point, however, decisively established by direct scriptural history, and more particularly of the reign of Hezekiah in the Second Book of Kings and Second Book of Chronicles. The great difficulty lies, not in finding but in selecting the testimonies, which are so profusely scattered over the Bible in favour of this prophet. “Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and should have been like unto Gomorrah,” Isa. i. 9. “And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrhah,” Rom. ix. 29.—“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted

above the hills ; and all nations shall flow unto it," &c., Isa. ii. 2, &c. "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains ; and people shall flow unto it," Micah iv. 1, &c.—"In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple," Isa. vi. 1. "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him," John xii. 41.—"And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not ; and see ye indeed, but perceive not ; make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes ; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed," Isa. vi. 9, 10. "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand ; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed ; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them," Matt. xiii. 14, 15. See also John xii. 39, 40 ; Acts xxviii. 25, 26 ; Rom. xi. 8.—"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," Isa. vii. 14. "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel," Matt. i. 22, 23.—"He shall be for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence," Isa. viii. 14. "As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence," Rom. ix. 33.—"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light ; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined," Isa. ix. 1, 2. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Esaias, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles ; the people which sat in darkness saw great light : and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up," Matt. iv. 14-16.—"For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return," Isa. x. 22. "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of

the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved," Rom. ix. 27.—"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek," Isa. xi. 10. "Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust," Rom. xv. 12.—"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die," Isa. xxii. 13. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," 1 Cor. xv. 32.—"And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open," Isa. xxii. 22. "These things saith he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth," Rev. iii. 7.—"Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare," Isa. xxiv. 17, 18. "Fear, and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the Lord. He that fleeth from the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that getteth up out of the pit, shall be taken in the snare," Jer. xlviii. 43, 44.—"He will swallow up death in victory," Isa. xxv. 8. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory," 1 Cor. xv. 54.—"For with stammering lips, and another tongue, will he speak to this people, yet they would not hear," Isa. xxviii. 11, 12. "In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord," 1 Cor. xiv. 21.—"Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste," Isa. xxviii. 16. "As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed," Rom. ix. 33. See also 1 Pet. ii. 6-8.\*—"Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men," Isa. xxix. 13. "Well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their

\* It is remarkable of this quotation that it is introduced by Paul with the words, "It is written," and by Peter with the words, "It is contained in Scripture,"—marking the equivalency of the two phrases.



mouth, and honoureth me with their lips ; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," Matt. xv. 7-9. See also Mark vii. 6, 7.—"For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid," Isa. xxix. 14. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent," 1 Cor. i. 19.—"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain : and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together," Isa. xl. 3-5. "As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth ; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God," Luke iii. 4, 5, 6. See also Matt. iii. 3 ; Mark i. 2, 3 ; John i. 23.—"Behold my servant, whom I uphold ; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth ; I have put my Spirit upon him ; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench ; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth," Isa. xlii. 1-3. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen ; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased : I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive nor cry ; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets," &c., Matt. xii. 17-19.—"Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear," Isa. xlv. 23. "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, every tongue should confess," Phil. ii. 10, 11.—"In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee," Isa. xlix. 8. "For he (God) saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee," 2 Cor. vi. 2.—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that saith unto Zion,

Thy God reigneth !" Isa. lii. 7. "As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things," Rom. x. 15. See also Nahum i. 15.—"That which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider," Isa. lii. 15. "As it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand," Rom. xv. 21.—"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Isa. liii. 1. "That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" John xii. 38. See also Rom. x. 16.—"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," Isa. liii. 4. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses," Matt. viii. 17.—"And he was numbered with the transgressors," Isa. liii. 12. "And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors," Mark xv. 28. See also Luke xxii. 37.—"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord," Isa. liv. 1. "For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband," Gal. iv. 27.—"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord," Isa. liv. 13. "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God," John vi. 45.—"I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David," Isa. lv. 3. "He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David," Acts xiii. 34.—"Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people," Isa. lvi. 7. "Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer?" Mark xi. 17. See also Matt. xxi. 13; Luke xix. 46.—"Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they know not," Isa. lix. 7, 8. "Their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace they have not known," Rom. iii. 15-17. See also Prov. i. 16.—"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath

sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," Isa. lxi. 1, 2. "And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," Luke iv. 17-19.—"Men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him," Isa. lxiv. 4. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," 1 Cor. ii. 9. —"I am sought of them that asked not for me: I am found of them that sought me not. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people," Isa. lxv. 1, 2. "But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people," Rom. x. 20, 21.—"The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all these things hath mine hand made," Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. "As saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?" Acts vii. 48-50.\*

\* See further—

Isa. i. 3.—Jer. viii. 7.

i. 11. vi. 20.

Amos v. 21, 22.

Mal. i. 10.

i. 15.—Jer. xiv. 12.

Mic. iii. 4.

Zech. vii. 13.

i. 17. vii. 9.

i. 23.—Jer. v. 28.

Zech. vii. 10.

ii. 2. viii. 21.

ii. 19.—Hos. x. 8.

Luke xxiii. 30.

Isa. ii. 19.—Rev. vi. 15, 16.

v. 1.—Jer. ii. 21.

Matt. xxi. 33.

Mark xii. 1.

Luke xx. 9.

vi. 3.—Rev. iv. 8.

vi. 9.—Mark iv. 12.

Luke viii. 10.

vii. 14. i. 31.

viii. 14. ii. 34.

1 Pet. ii. 8.

viii. 15.—Matt. xxi. 44.

Luke xx. 18.

viii. 18.—Heb. ii. 13.

Isa. ix. 6.—Luke i. 32, 33.

xi. 1.—Acts xiii. 23.

Zech. iii. 8.

vi. 12.

xi. 4.—2 Thess. ii. 8.

xiii. 10.—Ezek. xxxii. 7.

Joel ii. 31.

iii. 15.

Matt. xxiv. 29.

Mark xiii. 24.

Luke xxi. 25.

xiii. 19.—Jer. i. 40.

xv. 2.—Jer. xlviii. 37, 38.

Ezek. i. 18.



31. JEREMIAH.] The human authorship of this work is also announced to us in the work itself—being told, in the first verse of the first chapter, that it consists of “the words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah.” The use of the first person is also frequent—as in i. 4, &c.; iii. 6; ix. 1, &c. &c.—and in xxxvi. 1, &c., we read of a commandment from the Lord to Jeremiah by name

- |                               |                                 |                              |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Isa. xvi. 6.—Jer. xlviii. 29. | Is. xxxvi. 1.—2 Ki. xviii. 13.  | Isa. xlix. 10.—Rev. vii. 16. |
| xvi. 7. xlviii. 20.           | 2 Chr. xxxii. 1.                | xliv. 26. xvi. 6.            |
| xvi. 10. xlviii. 33.          | xxxvi. 6.—Ezek. xxix. 6, 7.     | 1. 4.—Matt. xi. 28.          |
| xxi. 9.—Rev. xiv. 8.          | xxxvii. 1, &c.—2 Ki. xix. 1.    | 1. 6. xxvi. 67.              |
| xviii. 2.                     | xxxvii. 32. xix. 31.            | xxvii. 26.                   |
| xxii. 4.—Jer. iv. 19.         | xxxvii. 35. xx. 6.              | 1. 8.—Rom. viii. 32, 33.     |
| ix. 1.                        | xxxvii. 36. xix. 35.            | li. 9.—Ezek. xxix. 3.        |
| xxiv. 2.—Hos. iv. 9.          | xxxviii. 1. xx. 1, &c.          | li. 15.—Jer. xxxi. 35.       |
| xxiv. 8.—Ezek. xxvi. 13.      | 2 Chr. xxxii. 24                | lii. 5.—Rom. ii. 24.         |
| Hos. ii. 11.                  | xxxix. 1.—2 Kings xx. 12.       | lii. 10.—Luke iii. 6.        |
| xxv. 8.—Rev. vii. 17.         | xl. 6.—1 Pet. i. 24.            | lii. 11.—2 Cor. vi. 17.      |
| xxi. 4.                       | xl. 8. i. 25.                   | Rev. xviii. 4.               |
| xxvi. 21.—Mic. i. 3.          | xl. 13.—Rom. xi. 34.            | liii. 3.—Mark ix. 12.        |
| xxviii. 16.—Matt. xxi. 42.    | 1 Cor. ii. 16.                  | liii. 5.—1 Cor. xv. 3.       |
| Acts iv. 11.                  | xli. 4.—Rev. i. 17.             | 1 Pet. ii. 24.               |
| Rom. x. 11.                   | xxii. 13                        | liii. 7.—Matt. xxvi. 63.     |
| Eph. ii. 20.                  | xli. 8.—James ii. 23.           | xxvii. 12.                   |
| xxxi. 6.—Zech. i. 4.          | xlii. 1.—Matt. iii. 17.         | Mark xiv. 61                 |
| xxxiii. 9.—Nah. i. 4.         | xvii. 5                         | xv. 5.                       |
| xxxiii. 18.—1 Cor. i. 20.     | Eph. i. 6.                      | liii. 9.—1 Pet. ii. 22.      |
| xxxiv. 4.—Rev. vi. 14.        | xlii. 6.—Luke ii. 32.           | liii. 12.—Luke xxiii. 34.    |
| vi. 13.                       | Acts xiii. 47.                  | lv. 1.—John vii. 37.         |
| xxxiv. 10. xviii. 18.         | xlii. 7.—Luke iv. 18.           | lviii. 5.—Zech. vii. 5.      |
| xix. 3.                       | Heb. ii. 14, 15.                | lix. 17.—Eph. vi. 14, 17.    |
| xxxiv. 11.—Zeph. ii. 14.      | xliii. 5.—Jer. xxx. 10.         | 1 Thess. v. 8.               |
| Rev. xviii. 2.                | xlvi. 27.                       | lix. 20.—Rom. xi. 26.        |
| xxxv. 3.—Heb. xii. 12.        | xliii. 11.—Hos. xiii. 4.        | lx. 3.—Rev. xxi. 24.         |
| xxxv. 5.—Matt. ix. 27, &c.    | xliv. 3.—Joel ii. 28.           | lx. 11. xxi. 25.             |
| xi. 5.                        | John vii. 38.                   | lx. 14. iii. 9.              |
| xii. 22.                      | xliv. 6.—Rev. i. 8, 17.         | lx. 19. xxi. 23.             |
| xx. 30, &c.                   | xxii. 13.                       | xxii. 5.                     |
| xxi. 14.                      | xliv. 12.—Jer. x. 3.            | Zech. xiv. 7.                |
| John ix. 6, 7.                | xliv. 28.—2 Chr. xxxvi. 22, 23. | lxiii. 2.—Rev. xix. 13.      |
| Mark vii. 32, &c.             | Ezra i. 1, &c.                  | lxv. 1.—Eph. ii. 12, 13.     |
| xxxv. 6.—Matt. xi. 5.         | xliv. 9.—Jer. xviii. 6.         | lxv. 12.—Jer. vii. 13.       |
| xv. 30.                       | Rom. ix. 20.                    | lxv. 17.—2 Pet. iii. 13.     |
| xxi. 14.                      | xliv. 13.—2 Chr. xxxvi. 22, 23. | Rev. xxi. 1.                 |
| John v. 8, 9.                 | Ezra i. 1, &c.                  | lxv. 19. xxi. 4.             |
| Acts iii. 2, &c.              | xliv. 23.—Phil. ii. 10.         | lxvi. 1.—Acts xvii. 24.      |
| viii. 7.                      | xlvi. 1.—Jer. l. 2.             | lxvi. 21.—1 Pet. ii. 9.      |
| xiv. 8.                       | xlvi. 7.—Rev. xviii. 7.         | Rev. i. 6.                   |
| Matt. ix. 32, 33.             | xlvi. 12. i. 17.                | lxvi. 22.—2 Pet. iii. 13.    |
| xii. 22.                      | xxii. 13.                       | Rev. xxi. 1.                 |
| xv. 30.                       | xliv. 6.—Acts xiii. 47.         | lxvi. 24.—Mark ix. 44.       |
| John vii. 38, 39.             | xliv. 9.—Zech. ix. 12.          |                              |

—that he should write his prophecies in a book, for the purpose of their being publicly read in the temple. We have besides express notice of him in sacred history—as in 2 Chr. xxxv. 25, and xxxvi. 21, 22—the last of these notices being repeated in the beginning of the book of Ezra. A divine original is expressly claimed for the book of Jeremiah at its commencement; and may be gathered from xxxiv. 2, and other places. It may also be argued from the known fulfilment of its predictions—as in chap. xxv. 11, 12, and xxix. 10—followed up by a noble consecutive testimony on the part of the prophet Daniel.—“And the whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations,” Jer. xxv. 11, 12. “In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem,” Daniel ix. 2. We subjoin a few more of these scriptural attestations.—“Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?” Jer. vii. 11. “But ye have made it (my house) a den of thieves,” Matt. xxi. 13. See also Mark xi. 17; Luke xix. 46.—“Now therefore, go speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good,” Jer. xviii. 11. “Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings,” Zech. i. 4.—“Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you,” Jer. xxix. 12. “And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications,” Dan. ix. 3.—“Thus saith the Lord, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not,” Jer. xxxi. 15—followed up by this most satisfactory authentication: “Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not,” Matt. ii. 18. The next is a

highly important quotation—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people," &c., Jer. xxxi. 31-33, &c. "He (God) saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people," &c., Heb. viii. 8-10, &c. The same quotation is repeated in Heb. x. 16, 17, as the saying of the Holy Ghost—a direct statement of the inspiration of Jeremiah.—"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord, from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner," Jer. xxxi. 38. "Then they builded even unto the tower of Hananeel," Neh. iii. 1.\*

32. LAMENTATIONS.] This beautiful poem bears upon it the

\* See further—

Jer. i. 8.—Ezek. iii. 9.	Jer. x. 7.—Rev. xv. 4.	Jer. xviii. 11.—2 Ki. xvii. 13.
ii. 6.—Hos. xiii. 4.	xi. 3.—Gal. iii. 10.	Zech. i. 4.
ii. 21.—Matt. xxi. 33.	xi. 11.—Zech. vii. 13.	xxiii. 1. xi. 17.
Mark xii. 1.	xiii. 17.—Lam. i. 2, 16.	xxiii. 5. iii. 8.
Luke xx. 9.	ii. 18.	vi. 12.
ii. 30.—Matt. xxiii. 29, &c.	xiv. 12.—Zech. vii. 13.	xxiii. 17.—Ezek. xiii. 10.
iii. 12.—Zech. i. 4.	xiv. 17.—Lam. i. 16.	xxiii. 24.—Amos ix. 2, 3.
iii. 22.—Hos. xiv. 1, 4.	ii. 18.	xxiv. 7.—Ezek. xi. 19.
vi. 14.—Ezek. xiii. 10.	xv. 1.—Ezek. xiv. 1.	xxxvi. 26, 27.
vi. 20.—Amos v. 21.	xv. 2.—Zech. xi. 9.	xxv. 30.—Joel iii. 16.
Mic. vi. 6.	xv. 9.—Amos viii. 9.	Amos i. 2.
Mal. i. 10.	xv. 16.—Ezek. iii. 3.	xxvi. 2.—Acts xx. 27.
vi. 28.—Ezek. xxii. 18.	Rev. x. 9.	xxvii. 5.—Dan. iv. 17, 25.
ix. 4, 29.—Mic. vii. 5, 6.	xvi. 9.—Ezek. xxvi. 13.	xxix. 10.—2 Ch. xxxvi. 21, 22.
ix. 24.—1 Cor. i. 31.	xvii. 10.—Rev. ii. 23.	Dan ix. 2.
2 Cor. x. 17.	xviii. 6.—Rom. ix. 21.	xxx. 9.—Ezek. xxxiv. 23.
ix. 26.—Rom. ii. 28.	xviii. 8.—Jonah iii. 10.	xxxvii. 24.



internal evidence of its likeness to other effusions from the pen of Jeremiah its reputed author.\* The only other scriptural resemblance that we notice is the following—"Thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people," Lam. iii. 45. "We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day," 1 Cor. iv. 13. Compare also Lam. ii. 17 with Zech. i. 6.

33. EZEKIEL.] The writer of this book lays claim repeatedly to supernatural communications from heaven—"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord," &c. Certain it is that Ezekiel holds a distinguished place in the traditions and estimation of the Jews; and is expressly named as one of their prophets by Josephus. He prophesied in Chaldea, at the time when Jeremiah prophesied in Jerusalem. There is a remarkable similarity between several of his images, and those in the Apocalypse.—"Open thy mouth, and eat I that give thee." "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness," Ezek. ii. 8; iii. 1-3. "And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey," Rev. x. 9.—"And the Lord said, Go through the midst of the city, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof," Ezek. ix. 4. "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea,

Jer. xxx. 9.—Hos. iii. 5.	Jer. xxxiii. 15.—Zech. iii. 8.	Jer. xlix. 9.—Obad. 5.
xxxi. 1.—2 Cor. vi. 16.	vi. 12.	xlix. 14. 1.
Heb. xiii. 10.	xxxiv. 1.—2 Ki. xxv. 1, &c.	xlix. 16. 4.
xxxi. 29.—Ezek. xviii. 2.	xxxvii. 1. xxiv. 17.	xlix. 27.—Amos i. 4.
xxxi. 31.—Heb. x. 16.	2 Chr. xxxvi. 10.	1. 8.—Rev. xviii. 4.
xxxi. 34.—John vi. 45.	xxxix. 1.—2 Kings xxv. 1.	li. 6. xviii. 4.
Mic. vii. 18.	xli. 2. xxv. 25.	li. 8. xiv. 8.
Acts x. 43.	xliv. 1.—Amos i. 14.	li. 14.—Amos vi. 8.
xxxii. 39.—Ezek. xi. 19.	xlix. 7.—Obad. 8.	lii. 21.—2 Kings xv. 17.
* See—		
Lam. i. 2.—Jer. xlii. 17.	Lam. ii. 14.—Jer. v. 31.	Lam. iii. 48, 49.—Jer. xlii. 17.
i. 12. x. 19.	xiv. 13.	xiv. 17.
xlvi. 3.	xxiii. 16.	iv. 13. v. 31.
i. 16. ix. 1, 18.	iii. 14. xx. 7.	xxiii. 21.
i. 20. xlviii. 36.	iii. 48, 49. ix. 1, 18.	v. 21. xxxi. 18

nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads," Rev. vii. 3.—"Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and in all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin—and all shall lament over thee, saying, What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?" Ezek. xxvii. 27–32. See also Ezek. xxvi. 17. "And the kings of the earth shall lament for her, saying, Alas, alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! And the merchants of the earth shall mourn over her, and stand afar off, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas! that great city," &c., Rev. xviii. 9–16.—"Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog," Ezek. xxxviii. 2. "And Satan shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog," &c., Rev. xx. 7, 8.—"Behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. These waters, being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed," Ezek. xlvii. 7, 8. See also Ezek. xlvii. 12. "In the midst of either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations," Rev. xxii. 2. The only other scriptural resemblance that we shall produce here is the following.—"Their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord," Ezek. vii. 19. "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath," Zeph. i. 18.\*

34. DANIEL.] The similarity between the prophecies of Daniel and those of the Apocalypse has been long remarked. "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him," Dan. vii. 10. "And I heard the voice of many angels: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," Rev. v. 11.—"The judgment was set and the books were opened," Daniel vii. 10. "And the books were opened; and the dead judged out of those things which were written in the books,"

\* See further—

Ezek. viii. 3.—Dan. v. 5.  
xi. 3.—2 Peter iii. 4.  
xii. 21.                      iii. 4.  
xviii. 29.—Zech. i. 4.  
xviii. 32.—2 Peter iii. 9.

Ezek. xxii. 27.—Zeph. iii. 3.  
xxiv. 9.—Nahum iii. 1.  
Hab. ii. 12.  
xxviii. 2.—Zech. ix. 2, &c.  
xxx. 13.                      xiii. 2.

Ezek. xxxi. 6.—Dan. iv. 12.  
xxxiv. 4.—1 Pet. v. 3.  
xxxiv. 23, 31.—John x. 11.  
xxxvi. 20.—Rom. ii. 24.  
xlvii. 1.—Zech. xiv. 8.

Rev. xx. 12.—“Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body was also like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude,” Dan. x. 5, 6. “And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice was as the sound of many waters,” Rev. i. 13–15. The illustrious testimony given by our Saviour to this prophet, fully countervails any discredit which the Jews have attempted to fasten upon him, by their distinction between prophetic and sacred books—a distinction rejected by Christian theologians. “For the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate,” Dan. ix. 27. “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place,” Matt. xxiv. 15. See also Mark xiii. 14, and Luke xxi. 20. The contemporaneous testimony given by Ezekiel, both to the existence of Daniel, and to the high rank which he held in the estimation of the Jews, we have in Ezek. xiv. 14, 20—and also in the irony of the address by the same prophet to the prince of Tyrus—“Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee,” Ezek. xxviii. 3. The name of Daniel, fixing on him the authorship of this book, occurs repeatedly throughout its chapters—vi. 20; vii. 15; viii. 15, 27; ix. 2, 22; x. 2, 11; xii. 4, 5, 9. He is throughout represented as the subject of special communications from God. The following instance of a revelation like to the apocalyptic ones should be added to the former ones. “And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and an half,” Dan. xii. 7. “And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven; and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer,” Rev. x. 5, 6.\*

\* See further—

Dan. i. 1.—2 Kings xxiv. 1.	Dan. vi. 26.—Luke i. 33.	Dan. xii. 2.—Matt. xxv. 46.
2 Chr. xxxvi. 6.	vii. 14.—Mic. iv. 7.	John v. 29.
iv. 34.—Mic. iv. 7.	Luke i. 33.	xii. 3.—Matt. xiii. 43.
Luke i. 33.	vii. 27. i. 33.	1 Cor. xv. 40.



35. HOSEA.] We now enter on the consideration of the “minor prophets,” whose works, amounting separately to twelve, were bound up in one volume; and were altogether ranked as but one of their scriptural books by the Jews. The application to them of the epithet Minor, respects the quantity, and not the authority, of their writings. The Jews frequently spake of them as *the twelve*, in like manner as the apostles are spoken of in various parts of the New Testament. The authorship of the prophecy of Hosea is ascribed to him in the prophecy itself—he being named in the commencement, and making use of the first person, particularly in the third chapter of the book. He is the subject of undoubted and express quotations in the New Testament. The first of those which follow is most conclusive. “And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God,” Hos. i. 10. “As he saith also in Osee, And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God,” Rom. ix. 25, 26. —“I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God,” Hos. ii. 23. “Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God,” 1 Pet. ii. 10.—“For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice,” Hos. vi. 6. “Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,” Matt. ix. 13. See also Matt. xii. 7.—“I called my son out of Egypt,” Hos. xi. 1. “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son,” Matt. ii. 15.—“O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction,” Hos. xiii. 14. “Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55.—“So will we render the calves of our lips,” Hos. xiv. 2. “By him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips,” Heb. xiii. 15.—Considering the small amount of the book, it is peculiarly rich in the scriptural evidence by which it is supported.\*

36. JOEL.] Even for this brief composition, there are not wanting some decisive references in the New Testament. Peter in the Acts of the Apostles quotes it, and gives the name of the author—which also occurs at the commencement of the book.

\* See further—

Hosea ii. 23.—Rom. ix. 26.

Hosea iv. 1.—Mic. vi. 2.

vi. 2.—1 Cor. xv. 4.

Hosea x. 8.—Luke xxiii. 30.

Rev. vi. 16.

There are one or two more undoubted citations of this prophecy, which are either given here or pointed to in a foot-note below. —“And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke,” &c., Joel ii. 28-30, &c. “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God,) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy,” &c., Acts ii. 16-18, &c.—“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” Joel ii. 32. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” Rom. x. 13.—“Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe,” Joel iii. 13. “Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe,” Rev. xiv. 15.\*

37. Amos.] This book also has its incorporated title, and its announced claim to inspiration. “And the Lord took me, as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go prophesy unto my people Israel,” vii. 15. The name of Amos occurs, with the use of the first person, repeatedly in the book, as throughout the whole of the 7th chapter, and in viii. 1, 2; ix. 1. He is twice quoted in the New Testament, not by name, but as belonging to “the prophets;” and in such a manner as might lead one to imagine, that the volume in which he was bound up along with the others, might have been referred to by its title. It was a volume which comprehended all the minor prophets; and so, if these quotations are to be regarded as a homologation of the whole volume from which they are taken, they might, without any stretch of argument, be pleaded as testimonies, in behalf not only of Amos himself, but of the other eleven with whom he was associated.—“Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offer-

\* See further—

Joel i. 15 —Isa. xiii. 6.

ii. 10.

xiii. 10.

Ezek. xxxii. 7.

ii. 11.—Jer. xxx. 7.

Joel ii. 11.—Amos v. 18.

Zeph. i. 15.

ii. 13.—Jonah iv. 2.

ii. 14.

iii. 9.

ii. 28.—Isa. xlv. 3.

Joel iii. 10.—Isa. ii. 4.

iii. 17.—Zech. xiv. 21.

iii. 28.—Amos ix. 13.

Zech. xiv. 8.

ings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus," Amos v. 25-27. "As it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon," Acts vii. 42, 43.—"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this," Amos ix. 11, 12. "And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things," Acts xv. 15-17.\*

38. OBADIAH.] In this "vision of Obadiah," the name of the *seer* is given at the commencement; and the prophetic authority is assumed by the writer in these words—"Thus saith the Lord God." The greater part of it bears a close resemblance in substance, and very nearly in expression, to certain passages in other prophets—as Jeremiah xlix. and Ezekiel xxxv. It does not seem to be quoted, for the confirmation of any fact or doctrine, in the New Testament—unless its undoubted place in the book of the minor prophets, entitles it to a share of the homage rendered to that book, when referred to as containing words, though not to be found in Obadiah, but in Amos. The sentence in 1 Cor. i. 19, though taken generically from Scripture, is considered to be from Isaiah, but finds at least an echo in this kindred verse of Obadiah. "Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understand-

\* See further—

Amos i. 1.—Zech. xiv. 5.

i. 2.—Jer. xxv. 30.

Joel iii. 16.

v. 8.—Job ix. 9.

xxxviii. 31.

Amos v. 11.—Zeph. i. 13.

v. 15.—Rom. xii. 9.

v. 18.—Isa. v. 19.

Jer. xvii. 15.

Joel ii. 2.

Zeph. i. 15.

Amos vi. 3.—Ezek. xii. 27.

vi. 8.—Jer. li. 14.

vii. 16.—Ezek. xxi. 2.

viii. 4.—Jer. xlv. 11.

ix. 7.—Jer. xlvii. 4.



ing out of the mount of Esau?" ver. 8. The remaining examples of an affinity to other Scriptures are given below.\*

39. JONAH.] For the existence and character of this most ancient of the prophets, we have the evidence of contemporaneous history in 2 Kings xiv. 25. "According to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher." His name is announced at the commencement of the prophecy, and occurs repeatedly throughout; and our Saviour Himself bears him express testimony in the following words—"A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas," Matt. xvi. 4. See also Matt. xii. 39, 40, and Luke xi. 29, 30. Again—"So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them," Jonah iii. 5. "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here," Matt. xii. 41.†

40. MICAH.] There is a very notable contemporaneous, or rather subsequent testimony given to this prophet by Jeremiah (xxvi. 18)—who not only gives his name, the place of his nativity, and the age in which he flourished, but makes an express quotation from his writings: "Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Zion shall be ploughed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest." "Therefore shall Zion, for your sake, be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest," Micah iii. 12. The following are quotations from Micah in the New Testament—"But thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel," Micah v. 2. "For thus it is written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of

\* See—

Obadiah 1.—Jer. xlix. 14.  
4. xlix. 16.  
5. xlix. 9.

Obadiah 8.—Is. xxix. 14.  
Jer. xlix. 7.  
10.—Ezek. xxxv. 15.  
Amos i. 11.

Obadiah 15.—Ezek. xxxv. 15.  
21.—1 Tim. iv. 16.  
James v. 20.  
Luke i. 32.

† See further—

Jonah iii. 5.—Luke xi. 32. Jonah iii. 9.—Joel ii. 14. Jonah iv. 2.—Joel ii. 13.

Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come forth a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel," Matt. ii. 5, 6. See also John vii. 42.—"For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: a man's enemies are the men of his own house," Micah vii. 6. "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household," Matt. x. 35, 36. The name of the prophet is given at the commencement, and a very express statement is made by him of his own inspiration—"Truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin," Micah iii. 8. He was one of the earlier prophets; and when his writings are compared with the direct history, it will be found that they shed a mutual light and confirmation on each other.\*

41. NAHUM.] This eloquent and sublime prophecy is ushered in as the book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite. The first clause of the 15th verse of the first chapter is almost identical with the first clause of Isaiah lii. 7—and the words are quoted as *written*, or, which is tantamount to this, as *Scripture*, by Paul in Romans x. 15.†

42. HABAKKUK.] The name of the prophet is given here also at the outset of the prophecy; and occurs again at the commencement of the sublime prayer in the third chapter. He speaks also in his own person in ii. 1—while in ii. 2, he quotes the express commandment of God for the writing of his prophecy—and this in order that it may be read, "that he may run that readeth it." The following are very striking and satisfactory quotations from this sacred writer. "Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it

\* See further—

Micah i. 2.—Is. i. 2.

i. 10.—Jer. vi. 26.

i. 11.—Isa. xlvii. 3.

i. 16. xxii. 12.

ii. 2. v. 8.

ii. 6. xxx. 10.

Mic. iv. 1, 3.—Isa. ii. 2, &c.

Zech. viii. 21, &c.

iv. 3.—Joel iii. 10.

iv. 6.—Zeph. iii. 19.

iv. 7.—Luke i. 33.

v. 5.—Eph. v. 14.

vi. 2.—Isa. i. 2.

Mic. vi. 8.—Deut. x. 12.

vi. 15.—Haggai i. 6.

vii. 2.—Isa. lvii. 1.

vii. 6.—Matt. x. 21.

Luke xii. 53.

vii. 11.—Amos ix. 11.

† See—

Nahum i. 15.—Isa. lii. 7.

i. 10. xiii. 7, 8.

Nah. iii. 1.—Ezek. xxiv. 6, 9.

Hab. ii. 12.

Nah. iii. 5.—Isa. xlvii. 2, 3.

Ezek. xvi. 37.

iii. 11.—Jer. xxv. 17.

be told you," Hab. i. 5. "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you," Acts xiii. 40, 41.—"Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry," Hab. ii. 3. "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," Heb. x. 37.—"But the just shall live by his faith," Hab. ii. 4. "Now the just shall live by faith," Heb. x. 38. As it is written, The just shall live by faith," Rom. i. 17. See also Gal. iii. 11.—"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," Hab. ii. 14. "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," Isaiah xi. 9.\*

43. ZEPHANIAH.] The name of the author is incorporated with the work; and the work itself is announced as "the word that came from the Lord." The references from, or affinities to other Scripture are given below.†

44. HAGGAI.] The existence and character of this prophet are attested in the book of Ezra. "Then the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel," Ezra v. 1. "And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo," Ezra vi. 14. Both the name and mission of this prophet are announced at the commencement of the book; and not only in i. 12, is he designed a prophet, but in the following verse is he spoken of as "the Lord's messenger," delivering the "Lord's message unto the people." The name of the prophet repeatedly occurs in the

\* See further—

Hab. i. 4.—Jer. xii. 1.

i. 8.

v. 6.

Ezek. xvii. 3.

Zeph. iii. 3.

Hab. i. 13.—Jer. xii. 1.

ii. 1.—Isa. xxi. 8.

ii. 4.—John iii. 36.

ii. 9.—Jer. xxii. 13.

ii. 12.—Ezek. xxiv. 9.

Hab. ii. 12.—Nah. iii. 1.

ii. 16.—Jer. xxv. 26.

ii. 18.—Jer. x. 8, 14.

Zech. x. 2.

† See—

Zeph. i. 13.—Amos v. 11.

i. 15.—Jer. xxx. 7.

Joel ii. 11.

i. 18.—Ezek. vii. 19.

ii. 9, 10.—Jer. xlviii. 2, &c.

Ezek. xxv. 1, &c.

ii. 14.—Isa. xxxiv. 11.

Zeph. ii. 15.—Isa. xlvii. 8.

iii. 4.—Jer. xxiii. 11.

Hos. ix. 7.

Ezek. xxii. 26.

iii. 9.—Matt. xxviii. 19.

Acts xv. 14, 17.

John iv. 23.

Rom. xv. 6, 16.

Zeph. iii. 12.—1 Cor. i. 26.

iii. 13.—Rom. xi. 5.

iii. 14.—Isa. xii. 6.

liv. 1.

iii. 18.—Gal. iv. 39.

Col. ii. 14, 20.

iii. 19.—Mic. iv. 7.



course of his prophecy ; and he has the benefit of at least one very decisive quotation in the New Testament. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land," Hag. ii. 6. "But now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven," Heb. xii. 26.\*

45. ZECHARIAH.] The name of this prophet is associated with that of Haggai in the book of Ezra—as may be seen from the quotations given in the last article. It is also introduced as the commencement of the prophecy ; and is repeated in the seventh verse of the first chapter. The use of the first person occurs everywhere throughout the book. And God himself is made to take up the word, as it were, from the mouth of the prophet, and to speak in His own person—v. 4 ; vii. 9 ; viii. 2, &c. There are many illustrious testimonies in the Gospels to the prophetic character of this book. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem ; behold, thy King cometh unto thee ; he is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass," Zech. ix. 9. "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass," Matt. xxi. 4, 5. See also John xii. 14, 15.—"And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter : a goodly price that I was prized at of them ! And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord," Zech. xi. 13. "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value : and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me," Matt. xxvii. 9, 10.—"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced," Zech. xii. 10. "And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced," John xix. 37.—"Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered," Zech. xiii. 7. "For it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered," Mark xiv. 27. See also Matt. xxvi. 31.†

\* See further—Haggai i. 6.—Micah vi. 14, 15. Haggai ii. 17.—Amos iv. 9.

† See further—  
Zech. i. 3.—Mal. ii. 7.  
ii. 10.—2 Cor. vi. 16.  
iii. 2.—Jude 9.  
viii. 16.—Eph. iv. 25.

Zech. xi. 13.—Matt. xxvi. 16.  
xii. 10.—John xix. 34.  
Rev. i. 7.  
xiii. 9.—1 Pet. i. 6, 7.  
xiv. 7.—Rev. xxii. 5.  
Zech. xiv. 7.—Rev. xxi. 23.  
xiv. 8. xxii. 1.  
xiv. 21.—Rev. xxi. 27.  
xxii. 15.

46. MALACHI.] The name of the prophet is given with the book at the commencement of it. And most decisive quotations are made from him by the apostle Paul, and the Evangelists. "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau," Mal. i. 2, 3. "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," Rom. ix. 13.—"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me," Malachi iii. 1. "For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee," Matt. xi. 10. See also Mark i. 2, and Luke vii. 27.—"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, . . . and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers," Mal. iv. 5, 6. "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," Luke i. 17.\*

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47. We have now presented all the scriptural testimonies for which we can possibly afford room. There is no such mass, and no such firm contexture of evidence, for the existence or authority of any ancient book, as we have for the canon of the Old Testament. The strength of this evidence does not altogether lie in those quotations from the later writers, which either name some prior book in the collection, or which name the author of it. There is many an undoubted quotation announcing itself to be such by the manner in which it is introduced, as when taken generally from "Scripture," or when said to be a thing already "written;" or, still more specifically, when said to be "written in the prophets;" or lastly, when said to have been spoken by God himself, and when what is thus spoken we find to be in the Old Testament.† Over and above these we can, apart from any note of introduction whatever, detect the words of a later writer to have been a quotation, from their close resemblance to the words of an earlier one; and, lastly, the recital of the same historical facts in the more recent, that

\* See further—

Mal. ii. 10.—Eph. iv. 6.  
iii. 1.—Luke i. 76

Mal. iii. 7 —Zech. i. 3.  
iv. 2.—Luke i. 78.

Mal. iv. 5.—Matt. xi. 14.  
Mark ix. 11.

† "But now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven," Heb. xii. 26—an undoubted quotation from Haggai ii. 6, though without the mention of its being written at all, either by Haggai or in Scripture. It is represented as the voice of "him that speaketh from heaven;" and many other instances occur of such virtual though somewhat disguised quotations.

we find to be narrated in the more ancient Scriptures, may be argued for the existence of the earlier record as a creditable document from which the information has been taken ; and the more if it be the only record that has come down to us of the history in question. There is a far greater likelihood, that the innumerable consistent allusions to the Jewish history, which are to be found in the later Scriptures, were derived from written memorials than from oral tradition—handed down with such uniformity, and with such particularity, and such fulness, through a track of centuries. And we may be sure that the very memorials which furnished the information, would have had infinitely better chance of being transmitted to later times, than other memorials, which, if not worthy of being consulted, would not be held worthy of being preserved. The credit in which any books were held by the men of a remote age, is our best guarantee for the care wherewith they would be transmitted to their children, and through them onward to the most distant posterity. In other words, the books which gave to the Jews at the time of our Saviour, and for some centuries before, that historical knowledge on which they placed their reliance, must be the very books that we have received from their hands ; and thus, in the identity of statement between the reputed later and the reputed earlier of these sacred writings, do we find a strong evidence for the reality of the earlier writings. For the full impression of this argument, we must divest ourselves of the rooted and established tendency to view the Bible as one book—it being in truth an aggregate of distinct books, which found a place there only because of the credit and confidence which they enjoyed in ancient times ; and on which account, they are entitled to all the greater credit and confidence from us in the present day. Each testimony is just the more valuable, that it is a Bible testimony ; and when viewed therefore, what each ought to be, as an independent testimony, never, may it well be said, have any books had so multitudinous an evidence, and that too evidence of which every ingredient taken separately is of such sterling quality and weight, as the books of the Old Testament. From the days of Moses, each successive period has borne downwards safely and solidly the memorials of the one that went before it, till all at length reached a firm landing-place, in the consent and testimony of our Saviour and his apostles—by which the Hebrew canon has been made to repose on the stable basement of all the evidence, historical and moral, which can be alleged



for the truth of Christianity. The canon of the Old Testament is pillared on a foundation as strong as the credibility of the New.\*

48. An investigation of the canon of the Old, forms the best preparative for those investigations which lead to the establishment and vindication of the canon of the New Testament. The materials for this inquiry are to be found in Lardner; and a very good digest of these has been given by Paley in his *Evidences of Christianity*. Jones, with many excellent considerations on the subject, is deficient in his exhibition of the positive evidence for our actual Christian Scriptures; and he has bestowed his main strength on the disproof of those spurious or pretended Scriptures, which, in the name of gospels or epistles, imposed on the credulity of past ages, and have been alleged by modern infidels, for the purpose of casting a general disparagement and discredit on the Christian religion. His book on the canon of the New Testament is altogether worthy, however, of perusal, by the professional student—while, for the general reader, we would recommend Alexander on the Canon, as a good though brief manual upon the subject. It must be obvious, from the nature of the case, that the scriptural evidence, which might be alleged in such force and fulness for the canon of the Old, must be very scanty, if it exist at all, for the canon of the New Testament—made up, as it has been, not by successive but by contemporaneous authors. Their references to the writings of each other can, in these circumstances, scarcely be looked for, however strong and valuable the concurrence of their independent depositions be, in regard to the great and common subject-matter of all their writings. There is an undoubted reference in the writings of Peter to those of Paul, with this most important qualification too, that he as good as calls them Scriptures, and assigns them co-ordinate rank and authority with the Jewish Scriptures. See 2 Peter iii. 16—where, after having introduced the epistles of Paul to the notice of his readers, he complains of those unlearned and unstable, who wrest them, as they did also *the other Scriptures*, to their own destruction. It has also been contended by some, that Paul in Rom. ii. 16, makes a reference to the Gospel of Luke, when speaking of “my gospel.”

\* We do not repeat here, though it be a consideration of the utmost possible strength, the concurrence, on this one point of the identity of their Scriptures, between Jews and Christians, who stand fiercely opposed in almost all others.

This is more doubtful. But to evince the great importance of a prior investigation into the canon of the Old, ere we attempt to investigate the canon of the New Testament—to prove, in short, that, even for the object of establishing the authority of the Christian Scriptures, the labour of this chapter has not been thrown away—it should be remarked, as an essential stepping-stone to the latter inquiry, that our chief argument for the esteem in which the writings of our evangelists and apostles were held from the earliest days of the Church, is, that they are designed by the same title, and that quotations from them are introduced by the same restricted and appropriate phrases, as the more ancient are in the more recent Scriptures; and as the Jewish Scriptures are, both by Jews and Christians, from the days of the New Testament. It is a mighty circumstance, that Peter should do the same homage to the epistles of Paul that he does to the sacred writings of the Jews, by honouring them with the same title *αἱ γράφαι*—which is tantamount to saying, that the epistles of Paul have as good a title to a place in *the Bible*, as the Psalms of David or the Prophecies of Isaiah. These titles and peculiar phrases do, in fact, form the great link of communication between the Hebrew and the Christian argument for the canonicity of their respective Scriptures; or rather go to identify them both into a common argument. When we read in the New Testament, or in any Jewish author, that “it is written,” we may expect a quotation from the Hebrew Scriptures; and when we read the same words in a Christian Father, we may expect a quotation from the Christian Scriptures. The latter, in fact, designate the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, and quote from them both in the very same way. The language which the New Testament uses, when signalizing the works of patriarchs and prophets, over all other works, is bequeathed to the Fathers of the Christian Church; and they make use of the very same language, by which to signalize, in like manner, the works of the evangelists and apostles. We find through the New Testament itself, a midway passage from the argument which establishes the canon of the Old to that which establishes the canon of the New Testament; and we shall find it is by the very same midway passage, that, beginning with the inspiration of the Old Testament, we are led, more surely and clearly than by any other track, to the inspiration of the New. In both arguments, the mighty importance of that prior investigation by which we first ascertain what are the Hebrew Scrip-

tures, and, secondly, what is the degree of their authority, is alike obvious.

49. If the reader, whether learned or unlearned, shall undertake such an interior examination of Scripture as we have now in a certain degree exemplified, he will find it laborious, but fruitful of the best impressions in favour of its perfect honesty and truth. He will meet with many thousand coincidences, which no impostor could ever have devised; and such evidences of reality, all beyond the reach of imitation, as will serve to convince and to confirm him, in a manner that no statement by another at second hand can possibly effectuate. The more thoroughly that he explores, the more will the instances of verisimilitude multiply upon his observation; till he at length sees the semblance to be a substance, and he will feel himself walking on the ground of solid history, and in the midst of actual transactions. It is thus that the Bible, as it has been called its own best interpreter, will be also found its own best witness; and that, not a single, but a marvellously sustained and multiplied testimony—for, looking to the composition of this volume, it is not at the mouth of two or three, but at the mouth at least of thirty witnesses, that the words of it are established.

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## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE INSPIRATION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

1. THE question which respects the Canon of Scripture is distinct from that which respects the Inspiration of it. The object of the one is to ascertain what are the actual books which should be received into this collection of sacred writings. The object of the other is to ascertain what are the kind and degree of their authority. We may allow a book to be canonical, and yet maintain opinions of all sorts and varieties in regard to the fulness or the partiality of its inspiration. The disciple of a plenary inspiration may deny to certain of our present scriptural books their title to a place in the canon; or he may contend that certain ex-scriptural books should also have occupancy there. On the other hand, the disciple of a partial and limited inspiration, or one who affirms of some books in Scripture, as the prophetic, that they are divinely inspired—while of the others, as the his-



torical, that they are only the best and most faithful of all human compositions—he may be perfectly satisfied with the actual composition of our present Bible, and find no fault either in defect or in excess with any of its ingredients. The question what ought to be the ingredients of this composition, is altogether distinct from the question which respects the precise quality of these ingredients. It is true, that the canonical are signalized above all other books, and are invested with a certain religious authority over the faith and consciences of men. But still it remains to be determined in how far they are thus signalized—by what height or at what distance are they elevated above them. What is the amount of this distinction? Whether these Scriptures shall be received as absolutely perfect and infallible?—or must we concede to a certain extent that they are tinged with human infirmity, and must be received, some of them at least, as the productions only of creditable men, but not out and out as unerring records both of the history which they narrate and of the mind and purposes of the unerring God? After the canon of the Scripture is fixed, these are questions which remain to be settled under the all-important theme of the degree of their inspiration.

2. We have already said, that to begin our inquiry with the Inspiration of the Old Testament, forms our best outset for the establishment of the Inspiration of the New. In regard to many of the writers in the former collection, such is the profusion of testimonies as to God speaking in them, and the word which they uttered and put into a book being the very word of God, that we shall not attempt a full or adequate exhibition of them. Moses “wrote all the words of the law,” “The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me,” says David. “David in spirit calls him Lord.” “The Holy Ghost spoke by the mouth of David.” “The Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice”—words spoken through the mouth, and transmitted through the pen of David. “Thou, God, . . . by the mouth of thy servant David, hast said, Why did the heathen rage,” &c. God said to Moses,\* “I will raise them up a prophet like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command them. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet which shall presume to

\* Compare Mark vii. 10 with Matthew xv. 4—where what Moses is stated to have “said” in the one passage, God is stated in the other to have commanded.

“speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.” In these words we read, not only the inspiration of Moses and of Christ, but the inspiration of all the true prophets whom Christ would have acknowledged; and we are accordingly told that God “spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began.” We cannot afford to go in detail over the proofs of the inspiration of these prophets separately. But, simply advert to the positive history in the books of Kings and Chronicles that we have for the preternatural communications of God with Solomon, we shall but remark of Isaiah that he ushered in what he spake by “saith the Lord,” and “the Lord hath spoken;” and that the “Holy Ghost spoke by Esaias”—of Jeremiah, that “the word of the Lord came unto him;” and “The Lord said unto him, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth;” and the commandment given to him, was to “write all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book”—of Ezekiel, that he saw visions of God; that the “Spirit entered into him;” that the “Spirit lift him up;” that “the hand of the Lord was upon him, and carried him about in the Spirit of the Lord;” and that, ever and anon, “the word of the Lord came unto him”—of Daniel, that he saw visions, and had revelations that he put into a book—of Hosea, that in calling on the people to hear him, he calls them to “hear the word of the Lord”—of Joel, that his prophecy is styled “the word of the Lord which came unto Joel”—of Amos, that his sayings are given repeatedly under the form of “thus saith the Lord”—of Obadiah in like manner, who, propounding his “vision,” begins with “thus saith the Lord”—of “the word of the Lord that came unto Jonah”—of “the word of the Lord that came unto Micah,” who was “full of power by the Spirit of the Lord”—of the “vision of Nahum”—of the “Lord answering” Habakkuk, and bidding him “write the vision, that he may run that readeth it”—of “the word of the Lord that came unto Zephaniah,” who in consequence speaks in His name, and announces that “thus saith the Lord”—of the word of the Lord having come by Haggai, who begins to prophesy with “thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying”—of the word of the Lord having come to Zechariah, who saw visions and held converse with the angels of God—and lastly, of Malachi, whose prophecy is in the terms of a direct communication from God himself, speaking in His own person, “I will send my messenger,” “I

will come near to you to judgment," "I am the Lord, I change not."

3. Now that the apostles were similarly inspired,\* may be inferred from the promises made to them by the Saviour. "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." "It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." "The Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." "He shall abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth." "The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "When he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." The Spirit, we read historically, did come. The illumination was given; and, as the fruit of it, the apostles could say, "they had the mind of Christ." "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." "The Spirit gave them utterance." "They spake the word of God with boldness." "Which things we speak," says Paul, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." "Christ speaking in me." "So ordain I in all the churches." "The things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." "My speech and my preaching is in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." "We speak the wisdom of God." "Ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God." "It seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and unto us." These are direct proofs, from the New Testament, of the inspiration of the apostles. But what gives such importance to the Old Testament evidence for the inspiration of the prophets is, the similarity in point of endowment and of authority, which is alleged to have obtained between the teachers of the Old and those of the New dispensation. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before, by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." "We are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."

4. But many are willing to admit the inspiration both of prophets and apostles, who stand in doubt of certain of the other scriptural writers. For aught we assuredly know, the historical,

\* The identity of the inspirations of the Old and New Testament seems strongly pointed at in 2 Cor. iv. 13.



and some of the other books of the Old Testament, may have been written by men not invested with the prophetic office ; and we do assuredly know that the Gospels of Mark and Luke, with the book of Acts, were written by men not invested with the apostolical office. In regard to many of the elder Scriptures, so far from knowing whether the men who wrote them were inspired, we do not even know the names of their authors. And besides, we might know of certain writers that they were at times visited with extraordinary communications from on high, or were occasionally inspired ; but when the question relates to a composition, of which perhaps they were the undoubted authors, the writing of it might not have been one of these occasions. They might not have been under the prompting or guidance of this heavenly power, when writing the book in question. They might not have been inspired *ad hunc effectum*. No one who has a general faith in the records of the Old and New Testament, resting on the common evidences of their general credibility, can doubt the special communications which Solomon received from God. But this does not settle the question, whether he was under the special and infallible direction of God in writing the book of Proverbs, or of Ecclesiastes, or of the Canticles—so as that these should be regarded as the Divine workmanship, God himself being the author of them. Nothing that has yet been produced, in behalf of the words and writings of those men, who properly and strictly were prophets, or of those whom Scripture has fully equalled to them as being apostles, can serve to establish the inspiration of the historical or certain of the poetical books in the Old Testament ; or the inspiration of two of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in the New.

5. Now, to meet this allegation of deficiency, and the demand founded upon it, let it be observed that there are two forms in which a testimony regarding inspiration might be given. It is an ascription which either might be given to the author, or which might be given to his work. The affirmation might be made that Solomon was inspired to write the book of Ecclesiastes ; or, without the mention of Solomon at all, it might be affirmed, that the book of Ecclesiastes is the product of inspiration. And in like manner, we may know nothing of the human authorship of the books of Joshua, and Judges, and Ruth, and Samuel, and the Kings, and Chronicles ; and yet, we might have abundant evidence of their divine authorship—for though nothing may have been said of the penmen of these books, viewed as writers ;

enough may have been said of the books themselves, viewed as works. Now it is this which gives such mighty importance to the *voces signatæ*—the special designation that rested exclusively, and by appropriation, on the Hebrew selection of sacred writings, and were applied to none others. No one, of our own day, would misunderstand either the application or extent of that most familiar of all names, the Bible; and every one knows that Ruth, and the Lamentations, and Zechariah, form parts of the Bible. And the name of Scripture, or Scriptures, or *αἱ γραφαί*, or *τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα*, or *τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ*, stood expressly in the place, and answered all the purposes of our own names—the Bible, and the Holy Scriptures, or the Old and New Testament. We, of the present age, might not know the author of Ruth; but we know that Ruth is in the Bible—and, without being informed who the author of this particular book was, without even the information of it in particular being inspired, we, if credibly informed that the whole Bible was inspired, would thenceforth believe in the inspiration of the book of Ruth, as part and parcel of that Bible. And the very question on which we have been engaged, when labouring to determine whether this one and that other book was canonical, is, whether it entered as a constituent, or formed an integral part of the Jewish Scriptures. If first we have testimony for the book of Kings being in Scripture, even that Scripture recognised by all the Jews, quoted by the apostles, and sanctioned by the Saviour himself; and afterwards have the information which can be depended on, that all Scripture is inspired—we require nothing further to be satisfied of the inspiration of the book of Kings. Once its rightful place in the canon of Scripture is determined; and then, whatever qualities of worth and perfection belong to Scripture generally, must belong to this book particularly. The settlement of the question whether or not a book is canonical, leads, by a direct transition, to the settlement of the question whether or not that book is inspired.

6. There is a twofold advantage in those testimonies, which speak, not of the powers imparted to the writer, but of the properties impressed upon the book; and, more especially, when these are predicated, not of one particular book, but of the whole collection comprised under the general name of Scripture. The first is, that we learn, what is the amount of homage that we might render, and what the degree of confidence we might repose, even in those parts of the Bible of which the authors have not been named, and of whose qualifications as messengers from

God to man we have never been told. The writings of the prophets themselves have a fulness of credit given to them from testimonies of this form, which they might not otherwise have possessed. For though repeatedly told of their supernatural converse with Heaven, we are not told that *the whole* of their respective books were penned under the guidance of inspiration. But the term "Scripture" covers the whole of their books, and comprehends also the historical and the poetical. From the lack of testimonies in one particular form, we are left uncertain who the authors were of most of the historical books, and are nowhere told of the inspiration of the writers; but this is completely made up by the abundance of testimonies in another particular form, and which speak to us most distinctly and decisively of the inspiration of the writings. We are not told of particular books, that they were written by God's messengers. But we are told of the books themselves, that they form God's message. In fact, the second is a better form than the first. A book may be written by a divine messenger, and yet may not have been written, or at least not all of it have been written, by him in that capacity; and so, for aught we know, there might be a mixture in it of the human with the divine, of the earthly with the heavenly. Not so when informed, generally and without any specified exceptions, of the book being a divine message; for then we read the whole of it with equal reverence, or at least with equal reliance on all its contents—with equal faith in one and all of its passages.

7. But another and no less important advantage of testimonies regarding inspiration in the second form, is that they supersede all the unwarrantable, and we should say all the senseless and unphilosophical speculation, in which the impugnors, and occasionally even the defenders of a plenary inspiration, have indulged, on the modes and degrees of inspiration. In much that has been said by these scholastics, not of the Middle Ages, but of the last and even of the present century, on the subjects of guidance, and superintendence, and elevation, and infusion, we can perceive nothing but an illegitimate attempt to lift that veil which screens from our discernment the arcana of a hidden operation—reminding us somewhat of the hopeless and irrational attempts, in other days, to seize upon and to define the occult qualities of matter. Instead of being satisfied to know of the virtues and properties of the resulting commodity, nothing will appease their spirit of ambitious inquiry,



till discovery has been made of the process of the manufacture. Now, enough for us to know of the result. For the imaginations of men as to the *modus operandi*, we infinitely prefer the palpable testimonies of Christ and His apostles as to the qualities of the *opus operatum*; and, without prying into the distinctions of Christian, in every way as fanciful as those of Jewish doctors of old, between one kind of inspiration and another—it is enough for us to learn, that the Bible out and out is perfect, that the Bible is an infallible rule both of faith and manners.

8. Now, in regard to the first of these advantages, how does the matter stand? There is a book of special designation, and claiming from the earliest times to stand apart from all human compositions, and that because of the high character which it assumes as the Word of God. From the age of miraculous evidence, there has been a distinct and a definite title to mark this book, and signalize it from all others, just as effectually as that appellative, the Bible, is understood by every peasant in Christendom, to specialize a certain volume which professes to be the Word of God, and in this respect to hold an infinite superiority over all the other authorship in the world. But *ὁ βιβλος*, the Bible, does not separate this volume more from all other books, than *αἱ γραφαί*, the writings in the days of the Old Testament, separated a part of that volume, or in the days of the apostles and Christian fathers separated the whole of it from all other writings. This designation was applied *κατ' ἐξοχὴν* to the Jewish Scriptures, by the Hebrews; to both the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures by the disciples of Jesus; and, by general consent and estimation on their part, stood distinguished from all the other writings in the world—as being the product of God's own wisdom and will, instead of being either framed by the wisdom or brought into existence by the will of man. Under this title thus understood, does our Saviour refer to them; and the sanction given in the New Testament to the Old Testament makes it in fact an easier task, to establish by argument the canonical authority of the whole Jewish Scriptures, than that of some of the separate pieces which enter into the Scriptures of Christians. *Ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς*—Search the Scriptures, saith the Lord to His countrymen—a direction as distinct and unequivocal to them, as Search the Bible would be to us. On another occasion He said to the Jews, *Ὁ δύνάται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφή*—Scripture cannot be broken—a term comprehensive of all and sundry that now enters into the Old Testament, and by which He homolo-

gates every distinct piece that enters into the Old Testament as at present constituted. Πάση γραφῇ θεόπνευστος—All Scripture is the breath and inspiration of God, said the apostle Paul; and this he affirmed to people who had no other understanding of the γραφή, than just the very collection in all its parts from Genesis to Malachi, that we have in our Bibles at this day. But we need not multiply quotations on a matter so obvious, as that, in the days of Christ and His apostles, this γραφή or γραφαὶ formed the appropriate and universally recognised title of a volume that was held to be the record of God's communications to the world. And then when the volume was augmented by additional communications from Him, and they too were admitted into the volume, the very title remained with it and served as a common designation to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. It is in one of Peter's epistles, where we receive the first notice of this extension; for there at least some of the epistles of Paul, that is, as many as were in existence at the time when Peter wrote, are put on the same footing as the Old Testament—its different parts being still τὰς λοιπὰς γραφάς, thus placing these productions of Paul on a level with the Old Testament; and referring to them as parts of those writings which *secundum excellentiam* are styled αἱ γραφαί, or as we should express it—the Bible. This consecrated term, then, authorized by our Saviour himself, as the one which distinguishes what we now receive as the Hebrew Scriptures, and extended by His immediate followers to what we now receive as the Christian Scriptures, till at length, in the third century, restricted to the very collection of pieces which make up our present canon, has, thus sanctioned in the days of highest and purest authority, been made ever since to rest exclusively on the book which in general understanding is the depository of God's communications to the world. This is our first advantage from the testimonies of that particular form which we are now considering. They lead us to extend our respects and give our reliance to the whole volume of Scripture.

9. There is a second advantage in this distinct and definite way by which there has been segregated a volume, under a title understood by all, as expressive of its being the Word of God, in contradistinction to the word of man; and in this character recognised by Christ and the apostles in reference to the Old Testament—by the apostles and first Christians in reference to the New. In regard to the former, there is no question that



the canon of Scripture as received by the Jews in the days of our Saviour, who has given them His express sanction, is identical in all its parts with our present Old Testament; and, in regard to the latter, there is a clear and broad line of division, between the writings which enter into our present New Testament and all others pretending to a similar authority. Here, then, on the whole, is a volume with a most distinct and declared barrier of separation thrown around it—all that is without, in the way of authorship, being esteemed as the product of human wisdom; all that is within being testified by the workers of miracles and the bearers of undoubted prophecies, to be the product of Divine wisdom—to be the Scripture which cannot be broken, to be all given by inspiration of God. Thus was the Old Testament isolated and set apart, in this character of high authority, even the authority of heaven, by Jesus Christ and His immediate disciples; and thus also has the New Testament been in like manner signalized—and that just by as great a weight of testimony, as goes to accredit the miracles, and everything else on which the divinity of our religion is upholden. We have the overbearing tradition of all ecclesiastical antiquity, for the sacred and separate character of a book, now stamped by the designation of the Bible; and if evidence like this is to be set aside, there remains little or no evidence, on which to base even the humblest of those pretensions that the most meagre of nominal Christians ever advanced on the side of Christianity. Grant then of this *γραφῇ*, a title as restricted, and appropriate, and expressive of the general understanding then, that the book so designated was the Word of God as the title Scripture is now, and containing at that time all the pieces which enter into our Scripture at present; that it held forth to the eyes of the Christian world, and has done so from the earliest ages of our religion, the book of God's revelation to man—what else could in these circumstances be the understanding of men, than that plainly within the limit of this book they held converse with that which emanated from God, whereas, without this limit they held converse with but that which emanated from man? This book stood forth to the general sense and understanding of the faithful, peculiarized by this distinction, that it contained the words of God's wisdom—whereas all other books contained but the words of man's wisdom. It served the purpose of a most intelligible and easily recognised limit—when thus made to know that, within the enclosure of a book thus signalized and singled forth,



the ground was holy, and that the language addressed to them there was the language of Heaven ; whereas, without the enclosure, the ground was common, and its language was the language of earth. In such a state of matters, there could be no mistake and no misplacing of confidence. Men would know distinctly when it was that the words they were reading might be implicitly trusted as the words of God ; and when it was that they might be judged or questioned as the words of a fellow-mortal. It was indispensable, we say, for men's guidance, that they should have a distinct and absolute understanding on this subject ; and nothing could serve the purpose better than just an isolated book whose visible margin, as it were, separated and marked off that which was of Divine inspiration, from that which was of human invention or human judgment. But when, instead of this, we are told that the limit does not lie around the book, but meanders in some obscure and untraceable way within it—when taught to believe, as we are by the advocates of a partial inspiration, that man's words as well as God's words are there, and that, to find the line of demarcation between them, we have not as every plain and unsophisticated man wont to imagine, we have not to make a circuit around the four quarters of the Bible, but to make incursion within the fence, and there separate the precious from the comparatively vile—when deprived of the palpable criterion we had formerly, which was simply and surely that this book is the depository of God's revelation, and all its contents are to be honoured and regarded as such, we are sent a rummaging among these contents, as if partly Divine and partly human—and, without any such criterion as we had before by which to discriminate between them—we are thrown adrift among the ambiguities of a question where all is loose and indeterminate, and are left at a loss to know what we shall trust as the sayings of God, and what we shall treat as the sayings of a fallible mortal like ourselves. The separation between them was trodden under foot, when the outer wall of the court was taken down ; and by the giving up of a universal inspiration, we are left without a Bible—for we are left to guess as we may when it is or when it is not, that the voice speaketh to us from heaven. It may well be said to emit an uncertain sound, when thus made uncertain of the quarter where the sound comes from ; nor can we imagine aught more precarious, than when given to understand, that there is a mixture of various sorts of inspiration in the book, and thus all is reduced to a dim and shadowy ques-

tion of degrees which is wholly unresolvable. It may continue to be called the Bible. But from the moment we are made to believe that it is not, all over, the Word of God, its character as a clear and unequivocal directory from our Master and Lawgiver in heaven is henceforth nullified. The second advantage, then, of testimonies in the particular form which we have been considering, is, that they lead us to respect the whole Bible equally, or at least to rely on the whole equally.

10. To reassemble these observations into one, or, at most, two steps of an argument. We have, in the first place, a collection of writings repeatedly adverted to in Scripture; and having one or more titles which served to mark them, just as distinctively as the book of our own faith is at present separated from all other authorship, by its well-known denomination either of the Scriptures or the Bible. At one time the appellation is given to them of ἡ γραφή or αἱ γραφαί; at another τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ, as in the verse where it is said, that “unto the Jews were committed the oracles of God;” at a third time, τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα, as when Timothy is said to have known from a child the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation. Under one or other of these titles, it is one of the surest points of ecclesiastical history, that all the books of our present Old Testament were comprehended, and these exclusively, when spoken of, as they repeatedly are, by our Saviour and His apostles. And these are the very titles, which, beginning with the apostles and descending from them with an evidence as copious and sure as that by which the miracles and all the historical foundations of our faith are substantiated, have, by the general consent of Christians, been extended to the pieces which make up our present New Testament—so that whatever is predicated in the Bible of the subjects which are thus designated, may be regarded as the testimony of revelation to the perfections and properties of this volume, or to the degree of authority which belongs to it.

11. Now, confining ourselves to a few of those passages in the New Testament, where the Scriptures are referred to under one or other of the denominations that have been now specified, “Jesus said unto them, Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures.” “Search the Scriptures.” “Scripture” (this we think the most distinct and unequivocal of all possible testimonies,) “the Scripture cannot be broken.” This cannot be exceeded; but it is equalled by the following testimony. “The Scriptures must be

fulfilled." The necessity thus alleged is, in another place, made the reason why our Saviour would submit to any endurance, rather than that one jot or one tittle of the Scriptures should fail—"But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope"—not some things in Scripture, but whatsoever things were written there, were written for our learning. Now some of these testimonies apply expressly to each and every part of Scripture—bearing at all times in mind, that this Scripture is inclusive, by the testimony of Christ and His apostles, of all that we now have in the Old Testament, and exclusive of every Jewish writing beside; inclusive also, on the very evidence which accredits Christianity at all, of every book that enters into our present New Testament, and exclusive of every Christian writing beside. Of this Scripture, in its totality, it is said that it cannot be broken—which it could, if any part of it, however small, might, as being but of human character and authority, be detached from the rest as being of Divine authority: And it is also said that whatsoever things were written there, were written for our learning—making no distinction whatever between the degree of faith and docility due to certain of these things, over certain others of them. And then when further told to search the Scriptures, and that Scripture must be fulfilled—this injunction and this information, distinct and definite as they are, when understood of a well-known book so denominated, and of all within the perimeter thereof, become altogether vague, useless, bewildering, and, in fact, convey no injunction that we can act upon, and no information that we can specify—if, on the principle of partial inspiration, the duty of searching, the certainty of fulfilment, apply only to certain parts of this Scripture we are told not what, to certain places and passages thereof we are told not where. At this rate, each is left to guess or to find a Scripture for himself; and, with all the properties and excellencies ascribed to this book, we positively do not know at this rate what the portions are which this description is meant to light upon.

12. But more than this. There are certain other designations, which, though not always appropriated to Scripture, yet have at times the utmost likelihood of being expressly and specifically so applied—or, if otherwise, leave the passages in which they occur without meaning, or at least strip them of all their useful-



ness. Every property, for example, ascribed to the word of the Lord, if not to be understood of Scripture and of all Scripture, is to us at least of no utility and of no practical significance whatever. Had God never published a Word to the world in which we live, it would have been of no importance to let us know that the "word of the Lord is pure;" and it would just be of as little importance, if, though He may have published such a word, we are left in uncertainty as to what it is. But apply this saying to the Scriptures, and we instantly restore effect and importance to it; and believing, as we do, that it is really expressive of Scripture, our interpretation of this testimony is, that in the *γραφή*, the *ἱερὰ γράμματα*, the *τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ*, the Bible, in short, there exists but one ingredient of pure unmixed divinity, utterly separated and free from the contamination of all that is human. Again, "the Word of God is a light unto our feet and a lamp unto our paths"—a most momentous piece of information truly, if we are only made to know what the word of God is; and nothing can be more distinct or satisfactory in the way of guidance, than simply to be told that the Word of God is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. But should the affirmation be made, that this applies only to part of these Scriptures, and we are left without any test by which to fix and identify that part—then the light wanes back again into darkness; and an extinguisher is put upon the Bible. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"—a most emphatic affirmation of the authority that lies in these words, did we but know what the words are. The doctrine of a universal inspiration leaves no doubt upon the subject—under the doctrine of a partial inspiration, we are left to grope our uncertain way to them. These and hundreds of other testimonies respecting the Word of God convey to us an explicit, a special, and a most important deliverance—only provided, however, that this word is a recognisable something which one can point to, and hold forth to the distinct observation of men. Grant us inspiration, we mean the inspiration of the whole Bible, and this we can point to: But tell us that there is but the inspiration of a part, leaving it to the fancy or inclination of each man how much or how little this part shall be—and then all these testimonies to the unchangeableness, and the purity, and the rightful authority of God's word become a thing of nought. They but present us with the predicates of propositions—leaving us to wander in quest of the subject to which they belong. They are

but half sentences, void and meaningless, and just for the want of some specific thing to which we can attach them.

13. The terms "inspiration" and "revelation" have been confounded; but in meaning they are really distinct from each other. A man might be inspired for the purpose of writing a history with selection and undeviating accuracy—yet with all the facts with which he was previously acquainted; and this would be inspiration without revelation. Or a man might be informed by a celestial visitant of matters known only to celestials, as one of the apostles by Jesus Christ, and may afterwards, in the natural exercise of memory and composition, commit the doctrines to writing; and this would be revelation without inspiration. The one does not necessarily imply the other. When a superhuman, but yet visible being, as our Saviour in the flesh, tells his disciples what before were unknown things of God and heaven, this is revelation. I would even call it revelation, when an invisible being, as the Holy Spirit, infuses the knowledge of these things into the minds of men. But when under His guidance, and by His suggestion, they are prompted to speak and write of them to others, this is inspiration. It would accord with the taste and theory of some, did we admit a revelation without an inspiration. We might imagine the whole scheme and articles of a system of doctrine made known by some preternatural agent to a commissioned teacher; and that after this all preternatural application was withdrawn from him—so that for a right conveyance to the world of what he had been thus told or taught, he is left to the retentive powers of his own memory, and to his own faculty of just and appropriate expression. With the advocates for a higher degree of inspiration, there is the demand for much higher securities than this against fallacy and error. They require a preternatural influence, not at the first deposition alone of the subject-matter of revelation in the mind of its intermediate messengers, but along the whole line as it were of the communication between God and the world—that the matter thus deposited might be kept entire in a mind exempt from all the infirmities of human recollection; and that when discharged upon others, instead of being so in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, it might be couched in the very words suggested by the wisdom of God.

14. It will be perceived by this simple statement, what room there is for manifold diversities of sentiment and understanding upon the subject—some, as Dr. Benson, conceiving only a first

revelation, and then the whole intermediate process of continued memory and ultimate expression, left to the operation of the natural faculties alone—others a bringing of all things afresh into the remembrance, whenever an occasion took place for the disclosure of them—others, additionally to this, an overruling determination, not of the thoughts alone but of the words employed to convey them, a verbal inspiration as well as an inspiration of ideas—others a total inspiration in the doctrinal of Scripture, along with a laxer inspiration or none at all in the historical of Scripture—others who make a distinction between the inspiration of suggestion and the inspiration of superintendence, conceiving the former to be unnecessary when the ordinary powers of memory and language are sufficient, either to retain all that is certainly known, or to convey all that is clearly apprehended; and the latter, again, to be desirable and safe, as a guarantee against the errors into which unaided humanity might else have fallen.

15. There are some of these theories which appear to involve an unavailing and unprofitable scrutiny into the mode of inspiration. The important inquiry is the effect of it, as realized on the Bible—the product of this inspiration, of whatever sort or description the inspiration itself may be. And the two most interesting questions connected with this object seem to be, Does the inspiration extend to the language of the Bible as well as to its doctrine and sentiment; and does it extend to the whole Bible or only to parts of it?

16. In regard to the first question, we are greatly helped to the solution of it by the testimonies of the second form. There is a certain special designation that occurs both in Scripture and in the writings of the Christian Fathers; and which serves specifically to mark the very collection of writings that we know, by evidence, as strong as can be adduced in favour of any historical point in Christianity, are comprised in our present Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. A something designed by the term *αἱ γραφαὶ* is the subject of many a predicate in the Bible; and we, knowing precisely what the subject is, are at no loss to understand to what specific things these predicates are applicable. It is of great argumentative importance in this discussion, that these *γραφαὶ* should be identified with our present Scriptures; for we are thereby given to understand that it is our duty to search these Scriptures, that we err by not knowing them, that they cannot be broken, that they must be fulfilled,



and that all of them are inspired. These all go to confirm our trust in the very books of our present recognised canon ; but on the special question whether the various properties of excellence thus attached to the Bible, are attached only to the ideas, or extend also to the language of the Bible, we would remark that they, one and all of them, are ascribed not to the ideas as existing in thought and conception in the minds of the inspired men, but to the ideas as brought forth in writing and substantiated in the products of their inspiration. They are the *γραφαί*, they are the *γράμματα*, they are the *λόγια*, which have all these virtues and excellencies ascribed to them. It is not of the doctrine as mentally apprehended by the sacred penmen, but it is of the doctrine as manually written by them, that the Bible tells us to search the Scriptures (*τάς γραφάς*), that the Scripture (*ἡ γραφή*) cannot be broken, that all Scripture (*πάσα γραφή*) is inspired, that the holy Scriptures (*ιερά γράμματα*) are able to make us wise unto salvation. It is not, we should observe, for the *νόηματα* or the thoughts, as deposited in the minds of the prophets and apostles, that our confidence is demanded: It is for the *γράμματα*, or these thoughts as bodied forth in the writings of prophets and apostles. It is not to the doctrine as existing within the inspired men in the form of ideas, that the high ascriptions of infallible and heavenly truth are given, for at this anterior stage it had not yet effloresced into *γραφαί* or *γράμματα* or *λόγια* ; and these very terms afford demonstration in themselves, that it is not to the ideal scheme, but to the written exposition of it, that we are required to yield our trust and the obedience of our faith. It is not for the doctrine as thought, but for the doctrine as written—not for the doctrine as residing in the silent depository of an apostle's thoughts, but for the doctrine as couched in phraseology and embodied in an apostle's words—it is for this latter that, in all the quotations we have offered, the implicit submission of men is so peremptorily challenged. It is not with the doctrine as existing in the mind of the seer or scribe, but it is with the doctrine as existing in the Scripture that has been written by him—it is with that we have to do. And it is uniformly to this Scripture that we find ascribed the high prerogative of authority over us, of unerring guidance both for the direction of our faith and our instruction in righteousness. It is not with the truth merely excogitated, but with the truth expressed, that we have any concern ; not with the truth as seen by our inspired teacher, but with the truth as by him

spoken to us. It is not enough that the Spirit hath made him to see it aright—this is not enough, if He have not also made him to speak it aright. A pure influx into the mind of an apostle is no sufficient guarantee for the instruction of the world, unless there be a pure efflux also; for not the doctrine that has flowed in, but the doctrine that has flowed out, is truly all that we have to do with. Accordingly, it is to the doctrine in efflux, that is, to the *word*, that we are bidden yield ourselves. It is the word that is a light unto our feet, and a lamp unto our paths: It is His word that God hath magnified above all His name: It is the word that He hath settled fast in heaven, and given to it a stability surer and more lasting than to the ordinances of nature. We can take no cognizance of the doctrine that is conveyed from heaven to earth, when it has only come the length of excogitation in the mind of an apostle; and it is not till brought the further length of expression, either by speech or by writing, that it comes into contact with us. In short, our immediate concern is with, not what apostles conceive inwardly, but what they bring forth outwardly—not with the schemes or the systems which they have been made to apprehend, but with the books which they have written; and had the whole force and effect of this observation been sufficiently pondered, we feel persuaded that the advocates of a mitigated inspiration would not have dissevered, as they have done, the inspiration of sentiment from the inspiration of language.

17. For trace the whole subject-matter of the Bible downward, from the place it once occupied in the pure and primeval fountain-head of truth in heaven—to the place it now occupies in the book that is presented to human eyes, and is made to circulate as the word of life among the habitations of earth. There can be no doubt that in the place of its original residence, it existed in the purest and most perfect form; but had it abidden there, instead of descending upon our world, to men at least it could have been of no use—to us it would have been of as little consequence as the merest nonentity. But the Son of God came forth with it from the dwelling-place of the Eternal, and brought it to the earth where He sojourned, without, we may stand well assured, without an error and without a flaw; but had He carried it back with Him to heaven, and withdrawn it from the view of mortals when He withdrew Himself from their view—we should have been still unblest by its light or its influence: But instead of this, He did leave behind Him with chosen dis-

ciples the memory of its doctrines and informations ; and, what is more, He sent a heavenly messenger from on high who still, we may be sure, deposited the precious treasure without one taint or particle of corruption in the breast of the apostles on the day of Pentecost. All then is pure and faultless hitherto. To this point the subject-matter of the Bible has been carried, without one shade of infirmity or desecration. But it has one stage more to travel, ere it comes to the end of its journey. It has to pass through the mind of these selected prophets and apostles, and to issue thence in language ere it comes forth in the shape of Scripture upon the world. Now it is here that we meet the advocates of a partial or mitigated inspiration, and would make common cause against one and all of them. There is not one theory short by however so little of a thorough and perfect inspiration, there is not one of them but is chargeable with the consequence, that the subject-matter of revelation suffers and is deteriorated in the closing footsteps of its progress ; and just before it settles into that ultimate position, where it stands forth to guide and illuminate the world. It existed purely in heaven. It descended purely from heaven to earth. It was deposited purely by the great agent of revelation in the minds of the apostles. But then we are told, that, when but a little way from the final landing-place, then, instead of being carried forward purely to the situation where alone the great purpose of the whole movement was to be fulfilled, then was it abandoned to itself, and then were human infirmities permitted to mingle with it, and to mar its lustre. Strange, that, just when entering on the functions of an authoritative guide and leader to mankind, that then, and not till then, the soil and the feebleness of humanity should be suffered to gather around it ! Strange, that, with the inspiration of thoughts, it should make pure ingress into the minds of the apostles ; but, wanting the inspiration of words, should not make pure egress to that world, in whose behalf alone and for whose admonition alone, this great movement originated in heaven and terminated in earth ! Strange, more especially strange, in the face of the declaration that not unto themselves but unto us they ministered these things,—strange, nevertheless, that this revelation should come in purely to themselves, but to us should come forth impurely—with somewhat, it would appear, with somewhat the taint and the obscurity of human frailty attached to it ! If that word of God have not been carried through all obstructions immaculately on to the Bible—if, as



existing there, its high and holy characteristics be at all overcast, or the tarnish of slightest corruption adhere to it; then, to man, it is practically the same as if corruptly deposited in the mind of the apostles, as if corruptly transformed by the Spirit or the Saviour, on its way from heaven, as if corrupted in heaven itself, or as if evil had found its way into the upper sanctuary, and the light that issues from the throne of the Eternal had been shorn of its radiance. It matters not at what point in the progress of this celestial truth to our world, the obscuration has been cast upon it. It comes to us a dim and desecrated thing at the last; and man, instead of holding converse with God's unspotted testimony, has an imperfect, a mutilated Bible put into his hands.

18. There are many who would shudder at the thought of there not having been a pure influx into the mind of the apostles; but deny, by their theories of inspiration, that there has been a pure efflux thence upon the world. Now in which of the states, we ask, is it, that the revelation of God to man is spoken of in the Bible? Not, we reply, in that state of the revelation, when it was making influx into the prophetic or apostolic mind—but in that state of it, after it had made efflux thence; after, in fact, it had been embodied in Scripture, and then spoken of as *αἰ γράφαι*; or been shaped into a word, in which shape it is, that through the whole volume of inspiration, every pure and perfect characteristic is assigned to it. In other words, it is not before the efflux, but after it had passed this ordeal, that we are told it cannot be broken—that it is all given by inspiration of God—that no man must take away from it, and no man must add thereunto. These and many similar things are spoken, not of the truth as it exists ideally in the mind of God, but of the truth as uttered verbally by the mouth of His prophets—or, rather, of their collective word, as expressing and embodying the truth. These high ascriptions are given, not to the act of inspiration, but to the product of inspiration; and we are taught, by the uniform testimony of Scripture, to believe of that product, that it is divine, and immaculate, and perfect. These things are spoken, not of a word, uttered perhaps in heaven, and which never reached our homes upon earth; but of the word that is nigh unto us, of the word as it came forth in utterance from the mouths of prophets and apostles, or as written by their hands. It is of the word thus brought forth in the Bible, and which men by their wretched hypotheses would make a polluted and precarious thing—it is this which is as silver seven times tried, and

which has the impress of the wisdom and will of God upon all its sayings.

19. Such being our views, it is the unavoidable consequence of them, that we should hold the Bible, for all the purposes of a revelation, to be perfect in its language as well as perfect in its doctrine. And for this conclusion, it is not necessary that we should arbitrate between the theories of superintendence and suggestion. The superintendence that would barely intercept the progress of error we altogether discard—conceiving, that if this term be applicable to the process of inspiration at all, it must be that efficient superintendence which not only secures that, negatively, there shall be nothing wrong—but which also secures that, affirmatively, there should at all times have emanated from the sacred penmen, the fittest topics, and these couched in the fittest and most appropriate expression. Whether this has been effected partly by superintendence and partly by suggestion, or wholly by suggestion, we care not. We have no inclination and no taste for these distinctions. Our cause is independent of them—nor can we fully participate in the fears of those alarmists who think that our cause is materially injured by them. The important question with us is not the process of the manufacture, but the qualities of the resulting commodity. The former we hold not to be a relevant, and we are not sure that it is a legitimate inquiry. It is on the latter we take our stand; and the superabundant testimonies of Scripture on the worth, and the perfection, and the absolute authority of the word—these form the strongholds of an argument that goes to establish all which the most rigid advocates for a total and infallible inspiration ought to desire. Our concern is with the work, and not with the workmanship; nor need we intrude into the mysteries of the hidden operation, if only assured by the explicit testimonies of Scripture, that the product of that operation is, both in substance and expression, a perfect directory of faith and practice. We believe that, in the composition of that record, men not only thought as they were inspired, but spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But our argument for the absolute perfection of Holy Writ is invulnerably beyond the reach even of those who have attempted to trace, with geographical precision, the line which separates the miraculous from the natural; and tell us when it was that apostles wrote the word which the Spirit prompted them, and when it was that they wrote the words which the Spirit permitted them. To the result, in our humble

apprehension, it positively matters not. Did they speak the words that the Spirit prompted, these words were therefore the best. Did they speak the words which the Spirit permitted, it was because these words were the best. *The optimism of the Bible is alike secured in both these ways*; and the sanction of the Spirit extended, both in respect of sentiments and of sayings, to every clause of it. In either way, they effectively are the words of the Spirit; and God through the Bible is not presenting truths through the medium of others' language; He in effect has made it His own language, and God through the Bible is speaking to us.

20. We are aware that by this language of concession, we might offend the alarmists on the side of plenary inspiration; but, really and in effect, there is no difference betwixt us. We are perfectly agreed as to the absolute and Divine perfection of the word—the optimism of the Bible. We are at one as to the qualities of the *opus operatum*; and, if we differ at all, it regards only the *modus operandi*—and it is just because of our aversion to intrude into things unseen, that we express ourselves so guardedly on the subject. The Bible is divinely perfect; yet in one sense may be regarded as the compound result of the natural and the supernatural—not so natural as to have one tinge of nature's infirmity adhering to it—not so supernatural as wholly to suspend and overbear the laws of man's natural constitution. It is thus that each prophet and historian and apostle of Scripture, preserves his own characteristic and complexional variety of style and manner—as much so perhaps, as if, instead of writing as inspired, they had been left to write as uninspired men. It were difficult, in these circumstances, to define how far the miraculous encroached on the ordinary processes of thought and expression. But quite enough surely for us, if we know it to have encroached so far, that the Bible, the resulting Bible, is so good, that it could not be made better. We agree with Dr. Carson and others, that the Bible is wholly the product of Divine authorship—God being the author of the ordinary as well as the miraculous; and it being wholly of His judgment and sovereign determination, to what extent the miraculous should overrule the natural, in order to the effect of furnishing the world with a perfect and infallible word. We do not detract, in the least, from the mastery of God's wisdom and God's will, in the composition of the Bible, though we allow that He was pleased to avail Himself of second causes. In as far as second causes



were concerned in the production of the Bible, we would not say that God *left* the Bible in any degree to the operation of these causes; but, believing as we do in His incessant agency, we would say that He himself operated by these causes—inso-much that every word, whether suggested to the mind of the writer, miraculously or not, was θεόπνευστος; every word was breathed into him by God. And yet we do not feel alarmed by the expression, that the writers were left to their own varieties of style and expression\*—as if it followed on that account, that the Bible was abandoned to the chance of deterioration thereby. If the word was suggested to the writer, it must have been the best word—or if the writer used the very word he would have done though uninspired, or otherwise, was left to his own word, it must have been because it was the best. Between the one and the other, we have still the best possible Bible. This information we distinctly and definitely have in Scripture; and this ought to satisfy us—although obliged by our ignorance to speak uncertainly and indefinitely of the operation within the veil. Enough to know that the mind of God, and that too conveyed in the best possible expression, is in every sentence of the Bible. Enough to know that, in virtue of His command, over all natural and all supernatural agency, the Bible was all made by God—though unable to assign the limit between the two, or unable to trace the footsteps of God in the making of it.

21. There is diversity of operations, but it is God who worketh all in all; and so much is He all in all throughout the Bible, that not only is every thought as He would have it, because His thought, but every word as He would have it, because His word. He is the universal agent; yet the whole history of the Church bears testimony to His liking, if we may so express it, for the instrumentality of man. He did not send an angel to convert Cornelius; He sent two angels, one to Cornelius, and the other to Peter, to arrange a meeting between them—that the words of salvation might be heard from the lips of a fellow-mortal. Even the Bible, of itself and without the enforcements of a human expounder, is not the great instrument of Christianization. It is the Bible in the hands, whether of parents or ministers, set forth in explanation by a living instrument, and urged on the feelings and consciences of men by the energy of

\* The miraculous agency of God did not overbear the natural tendency of the human authors of the New Testament to the use of Hebraisms and hence their Hellenistic Greek.

a living voice. And God has made use, we know not how far, of this law of human sympathy in the composition of the Bible. In this view, we are not at all startled by the evident copyings of the prophets from each other, or the copyings of the evangelists, as alleged by those who speculate on the origination of the Gospels, or by the quotations as if *memoriter* or from the popular translation of the Old Testament into the New. It detracts not from the inspiration of the Bible, that we can reason on the formation and transmission of it, and draw evidence from these—just as we do in the ordinary questions of criticism, from the phenomena of human compositions. Whatever the steps were by which each passage or each sentence and word has been introduced into the record, they are there by the appointment of that God, who, at the same time, has told us of the infallibility of that record, and that though heaven and earth must pass away, not one jot or one tittle of it shall fail. The fact of its being within the four corners of the Bible, is in itself proof of its being part and parcel of God's communication to the world. We believe in the total inspiration, not from what we know of the process, but from what we have been told of the product. Not one word could be altered, but for the worse; and, whether by instruments or without them, the whole authorship, both in substance and expression, is God's.

22 The next question which we shall discuss, but shortly, is, whether this inspiration extends to the whole Bible, or only to parts of it. We have already expatiated on the state of fearful precariousness in which the faith of Christians would be placed, if, instead of the limit between the inspired and the uninspired being just the whole circumference of Scripture, that limit were conceived to meander obscurely within the surface of the record; and we were left without one steadfast or palpable criterion by which to discriminate between the things of God and the things of man. We are aware of a general impression on this subject, that inspiration was less needed for Scripture history than for Scripture doctrine. This, we have already stated, proceeds on a confusion of sentiment, in virtue of not distinguishing between the office of inspiration as an importer and its office as an exporter of truth. In discharge of the former office, inspiration is more required for the truths of doctrine than for the facts of history—these facts, in many instances, being first made known, not by revelation at all, but by common observation, and in the exercise of the natural faculties. But in the latter office, even

that of an exporter, inspiration may be more required for narrative than for doctrine ; and that, not merely because the manifold details of it are with more difficulty remembered than the leading articles of a system of truth—not merely because the memory requires to be aided in the business of recalling them ; but because the judgment more requires to be aided in the business of selecting them. It is quite a mistake that the historical parts, either of the Old or the New Testament (we mean the writing or the giving of them forth), required less the guidance of inspiration, than the doctrinal or even the prophetic. Not to speak of the errors in the selection, we ask our readers to think, in such a mass and multitude of materials, what an interminable record it would have been, had each of the various historians been abandoned to the impulses of his own taste and his own fancy ? Where would have been that condensed and expressive brevity which is nowhere else to be met with in the whole compass of literature ? How else could the record of such a number of centuries have been given at once so briefly and yet so comprehensively ? What would have been our security, that, in such an infinite diversity of topics, the most pertinent would have been selected ; and those which are best adapted to the purposes of a revelation ? That there should be such a keeping between the parts of this vast and varied miscellany—that altogether it should be confined within dimensions so moderate, that, instead of swelling out into an unmanageable size, this record of thousands of years should, though not a meagre chronicle of events, but a vivid and interesting narrative abounding throughout in touches of graphic delineation, should, nevertheless, have all been comprised within the limits of a pocket volume—there must have been a management here beyond the wisdom of man, and far more beyond it in the historical than in the didactic parts of the composition. There must have been one presiding intellect that foresaw all, and overruled all—for the random concurrence of such a number of authors could never have terminated in such a unique and wondrous combination—insomuch that it holds more emphatically true of the historical than of the doctrinal in the Old Testament, that “ whatever things were written aforetime were written for our admonition, on whom the latter ends of the world have come.”

23. This consideration is insisted on with great strength and judgment by Mr. Haldane, in his pamphlet on Inspiration ; and at still greater length, in a way, too, we think exceedingly



striking, by Joseph Cottle, in the second volume of a miscellaneous work, entitled "Malvern Hills, with Minor Poems and Essays." The following are copious extracts from one of those essays, being an "Argument in favour of Christianity, deduced from the size of the Bible." The whole argument, which is admirably put, is well worthy of perusal. "When an uninspired man undertakes to write an important history, entering often into detail, of incident, description, and delineation, the work necessarily becomes extended. But when mighty events are recorded—the rise and fall of states—the lives of warriors and kings—the principles that regulated their conduct—the aggressions of neighbouring potentates, with all the results and changes which arose from conquest or subjugation—the boldest reader is appalled at the probable accumulation of pages. If this writer has to describe also his own country and ancestors, under all the impressions of personal and national feeling, the temptation to amplify becomes still more imperative: and to what a magnitude might a work be supposed to extend, which was to comprise the labours not only of two or three such writers, but a long succession of them through many generations? Now the Bible is this extraordinary book, and it is not only totally dissimilar to all others in its nature and execution, but is equally contradistinguished by the rarely-combined qualities of comprehension and succinctness. The transactions referred to are grand beyond comparison. The writers related occurrences which excited a supreme interest in their minds. They were personally, as well as relatively, connected with the circumstances recorded. Many of them narrated their own exploits, as well as the exploits referable to anterior ages. The multifarious writers consisted of historians, legislators, biographers, moralists, poets, and prophets. The periods described present a matchless assemblage of important events—the creation; the fall; the antediluvian corruption of man; the deluge; the confusion of tongues; the origin of all the great monarchies of the earth; the lives of the patriarchs, entering often into the minutest statements; their wonderful escape from famine; the call of a particular people (springing from the patriarchs, in whom was preserved, amid universal polytheism, the knowledge of the one living and true God); their ultimate bondage and miraculous preservation; their wandering for forty years through the desert; the giving of the moral and ceremonial law; the establishment of the same people in Canaan, where they were sustained for

fifteen hundred years, till the coming of Christ, while all the great dynasties by which they were surrounded successively crumbled away—the Babylonish, the Assyrian, the Persian, the Egyptian, and the Grecian. To these events must be added the expulsion of numerous idolatrous long-established and powerful nations of Palestine; the reigns of an extensive succession of monarchs in two different lines, under whom the grandest and most complex transactions occurred which could pertain to so limited a region, including the destruction of Zion and its magnificent temple; the captivity of a whole people for seventy years; their ultimate redemption, with the rebuilding of their city and the temple of ‘their Great King.’ At length, in the fulness of time, the Saviour of the world appeared, in whom a thousand predictions all centred. His birth and ancestry are narrated, with many incidental occurrences. His sermons are given; His precepts; His important actions; His miracles, and His prophecies. To this are subjoined His arraignment at the bar of Pilate; an account of the indignities which He endured, His patient sufferings, His death, and His resurrection. To all this are added the lives and travels of His apostles; the establishment of the first Christian churches, with a narrative of individual and general persecutions; a voyage abounding with striking incidents; twenty-one apostolical epistles; and the whole concluding with a series of the sublimest revelations; yet this diversified mass of materials is concentrated into a compass which a *finger* might suspend, and a *wayfaring man* can read!” “All must feel that a few words added to, or subtracted from, many of the precepts or parables of our Redeemer would have jarred and brought down the whole, comparatively to a human level; but they stand at present in a sacred investment of language, which, even if they (with the other Scriptures) were not guarded ‘by the plagues which are written in this book,’ none would dare to violate. To furnish an additional example of the brevity contained in Scripture, it may be remarked, what an extent of condensed meaning appears in the explanation which Christ gave of His parable of the end of the world; ‘He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels.’ In the attenuated thread of ordinary composition, what space would not have been

occupied by this and many other brief specimens of Biblical narrative?" "But to recur finally to the 'size of the Bible.' With such strong inducements to expatiate, in the respective writers, had it not been for an *overruling Providence* in restraining their natural dispositions, a hundred folio volumes could scarcely have contained so vast a depository as the *Sacred Volume*. In this case, for all practical purposes, it must have become nearly a sealed book; independently of the impossibility which would have existed, in a *manuscript age*, of disseminating copies sufficient to guard against the ravages of time, or to allow *three* transcripts to the whole world. This compression must be viewed as one of the most striking of the Scripture miracles." "Jesus Christ, instead of preparing this well-digested statement of His actions, doctrines, and miracles, *never wrote one word!* Instead of selecting historians to record His life from among the learned and refined, He chose rather for His coadjutors and biographers illiterate fishermen! Instead of providing for the future, and testifying an earnestness, lest succeeding generations should but imperfectly comprehend His designs, arising from the incompetency of the agents who were to transmit a statement of them to posterity; instead of cautioning those of His followers who might project a history of their Master for distant ages, to be faithful and to omit no part of those *leading points* on which the strength of His mission rested, He absolutely gave *no* directions, made *no* provision, and discovered *no* solicitude!"

24. As for those who object to a universal inspiration, because of the alleged insignificance of certain topics in the Bible, we would bid them consider how the Divinity stands related to the various parts in the volume of nature. In that volume, we meet with interminable variety, from things momentous to things minute and seemingly insignificant—from the mighty orbs of the firmament to the particles of dust that float in the sunbeam—from organizations the most exquisite, to rude and unshapen masses strewn about in negligent confusion, and that appear subservient to no purposes either of utility or decoration. Yet we should not dissociate a God from even what to our eye is most paltry and worthless in that vast assemblage of objects which make up His universe. Though we can find no meaning either in the loathsome or in the little of creation, we never once think that His power and His purpose had no concern either in the formation or in the continuance of them. We



admit that His creative energy originated all, and that His sustaining providence upholds all—in a word, that everything which is, though the least and the humblest of His creatures, was as much bidden by Him into existence, and so is as instinct with divinity as the noblest and most stupendous of any of His works. It speaks not to the disgrace or degradation, but to the incomprehensible greatness and perfection of the Deity—that there should be room alike for the vast and for the puny within the circle of His regards—that neither things of loftiest magnificence should be above the reach of His high contemplation, nor things the most minute and microscopical should be beneath His care—that He should comprehend in one wondrous range of providence the extremes of magnitude—and that while presiding over the circuits of immensity, still it is to a pervading energy from Him that we are beholden for every pile of grass, for every insect which crawls on earth's lowly platform.

25. Such being the character of His works, for ourselves we should not be startled or surprised at finding an analogous character in His word; or, though there should be things of exceeding various import there, from matters that appear to us though falsely of trivial interest, to matters on which there directly and evidently hinge the interests of eternity. We can see no incongruity, but the opposite—in that the God of nature, who has lavished such a profusion of workmanship on the curious tabernacle of man's body, and numbers even the hairs of his head—should be also the God of revelation, though He there manifests a wisdom alike inexplicable, in the minute and manifold directions which He gives for the complicated structure of the Jewish temple and tabernacle. In like manner, when on the face of creation we see an extended desert, unpeopled either by the animal or the vegetable tribes—we will not discredit the Bible, as being the workmanship and the whole workmanship of God, because of its many intervening spaces, that present us with nought but a barren nomenclature,\* and have neither narrative nor doctrine to enliven them. All we should require is evidence that the Bible as a whole is the production of God; and after that, we would never propose to dissever Him from

\* The nomenclature of Scripture is, however, not barren. It has proved a guide to discovery respecting the history and state of nations; and there is no calculating on the uses, in the way of further discovery and evidence, which its catalogues of names may yet subserve. See the identity of the Ishmaelites and Arabians, demonstrated by the Rev. Charles Forster, in his work on "Mahomedanism."

certain parts of that Bible, because of their fancied unimportance in the eyes of man. He is no more to be detached from what might appear to us the insignificances of the record, than detached from what we might also esteem to be the insignificancies of nature ; and if there should occur a meagre chronicle or some humble incident in the one—we must not forget that in the other there is many a naked rock not beneath His creative power, many a reptile not beneath His creative skill. We are really no judges of what might be deemed worthy of a God to make, or worthy of a God to reveal. There are inexplicable mysteries both in His world and in His word ; and, in as far as we are puzzled to account for the apparent uselessness or meanness of certain parts in either, the mysteries are completely analogous. After the evidence, in fact, whether of God being the author of nature or the revealer of Scripture—we hold all objections grounded on the littleness of the products in the one, or the littleness of the informations in the other, to be irrelevant and presumptuous. In the actual state of the proofs for the Bible being entirely the product of His wisdom, we are as little disposed to regard a single verse as the manufacture of man because of its unimportance—as to believe that the lowly weed is the offspring of some inferior power, because it wants the loveliness or the grandeur of higher objects in creation.

26. The arguments for inspiration have been charged with the vice of reasoning in a circle. For example, and as one of these arguments, the apostles themselves tell us that they were inspired. To this effect they quote the promise of our Lord, who assured them that He would send the Spirit—one of whose functions it should be to bring all things to their remembrance. Their statement of the promise, deriving all its authority from the fidelity of their remembrance, is to us the proof of their inspiration ; but the inspiration was given to secure the accuracy of their remembrance. So that our trusting to their remembrance, when they tell us of their inspiration, is very like a *petitio principii*—because, when confiding in the apostolic statement, we seem to take for granted the inspiration which that statement is brought to prove. But the real soundness and consecutiveness of the argument may, we think, be manifested by the following illustration.—Suppose I were told by another a hundred different things, all of which it was of importance I should distinctly remember, perhaps for the purpose of giving forth a publication about them—there would certainly be some

hazard of my recollection not serving me in so many instances ; but suppose further a collection of written notices on the whole subject, placed in some depository that should be open to me when I stood in need of refreshing my memory ; and I were told that I should find all requisite aid for the penning of my history there. Though, without this expedient, there was the utmost danger, or rather the utmost certainty, that I would not recollect with unfailing accuracy the hundred things wherewith I had been charged, there would be, along with this, the undoubted security that I would not forget the one thing of a general reference to the depository, whenever I stood in need of having all the varied informations I ever received, distinctly and in all their minuteness recalled to me. There might be a dead certainty of my being correct in one act of the memory, however impossible that I could be correct in a hundred acts ; and that not merely because it is easier to remember one thing than a hundred, but because the very great and general importance of this one thing, comprehensive, in fact, of all the rest, could not fail to find such a lodgment for itself in my recollection, as would give me the moral certainty at all times, that my superior had referred me to the depository, and that in that depository I should find all the aid and information requisite to qualify me for the undertaking he had put into my hands.

27. Now the parallel is just as close and convincing as possible. The varied incidents of our Saviour's life and sayings as recorded in the four evangelists, all the apostles together could not have borne in their memory alone ; but the one promise of a monitor who should bring all these things to their remembrance, not one of them would forget. That the information they wanted was all lodged in the upper depository of heaven, and that it might be fetched down thence by believing prayer in all needful supplies for the various branches of the apostolic office, they could not fail both to recollect and to proceed upon. The several hundred things in all their minuteness they could not by any possibility have actually remembered of themselves ; but as to the one thing, the all-important one thing, there was just as little possibility of any one of them being mistaken. We have thus as good evidence of the inspiration of the apostles, as we have of any one memorable and palpable fact recorded in any of the four evangelists. The suggestions of the Spirit, too, when bringing things to their remembrance,



would, in most instances, be accompanied by a consciousness and an act of concurrence on the part of their own natural memory, that each suggestion was a correct one;\* and hence a daily and growing confidence in the fidelity of that monitor, whose office it was to guide them into all truth.

28. There is a certain reigning character throughout all the doctrine and all the morality of Scripture, wherewith this tenet of a partial or modified inspiration is totally and irreconcilably at variance. Whatever principle it announces, it announces in that absolute and uncompromising way, which admits of no indulgence for the least shade or degree of its opposite. Of this, innumerable instances might be given. "He that sinneth in one point is guilty of all," so as to bring upon him the full weight of an outraged law by one iota of deviation. "He that is unfaithful in the least is unfaithful also in much"—thus disclaiming all toleration for what may be deemed by us to be the slighter iniquities of human conduct. The accursed thing of Achan brought down, in judgment from heaven, discomfiture and dismay on the thousands of Israel. The eating of one solitary, because forbidden, apple, put forth a world and its outcast species from beyond the pale of God's unfallen creation. "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled;" and it would come all the nearer to our argument, if law were taken in the bibliographical sense of it, as expressing a portion, or even at times the whole of the Scripture. "Whosoever breaketh the least of these commandments shall not enter into heaven." This rigid, this resolute assertion of a principle, to be upheld in all its entireness, and not deviated from by a single hairbreadth, is one great characteristic of the Bible. The whole epistle to the Galatians is founded upon it. There was one solitary rite to which the apostle would give no quarter, not for an hour, because it trenched, by however so small a fraction, on the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The Scripture abounds in specimens of this sort—announcing its principle with all the decision and distinctness of a category; and planting an impassable barrier, or describing a clear and uneffaceable line of demarcation between that principle and its opposite. There is no shifting, no shuffling between the incompatible terms of an alternative. In the spirit of a prompt, and steadfast, and exalted consistency, it abhors all amalgamation of things by nature immiscible; and this we understand to have been the spirit in

\* See our Natural Theology. Book IV. chap. i. art. 3.

which Paul affirmed that salvation is either wholly of works or wholly of grace. It must be of the one altogether, or of the other altogether, but not a composition of both. "If by grace, it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more of grace, otherwise work is no more work." And we hold that, on the question of inspiration, there is the same kind of impregnable rampart by which to guard, from all commixture and commutation, a doctrine intact and inviolable. That venerable record which has come down through a long succession of prophets, and passed the ordeal of Christ and His apostles, and has been handed from one age to another in the unquestioned character all along of being the word of God—it is not a medley of things divine and things human; but is either throughout a fallible composition, or throughout, and in all its parts, the rescript of the only wise and true God. All over it has the strength and faithfulness of the Divinity, or all over the weakness and fallibility of man. It is the Bible, or it is no Bible. We keep by the former term of the alternative. We hold all the ground to be holy, that is within the limits of this venerable record; and that the fence thrown around it admits of no inroad to that which is human, among that which is purely and sacredly and altogether Divine. It is guarded, strictly and severely guarded, by the menaces of a jealous God against the daring footstep of any who shall intrude within its barrier—either on purpose to add, or on purpose to take away. He hath done to Scripture what He did to Sinai, when He set bounds about the mount, and did sanctify it—so that should priests or people break through to bring up their words beside the words of the Lord, the Lord would break forth upon them.

29. We may have differed from the advocates of a rigid and universal inspiration, in their notions regarding the *process* of a universal suggestion; but in asserting out and out the perfection and immaculate purity of the Sacred Volume, we have not receded behind them by a single hairbreadth. We know that on every great question, the contest between the right and the wrong lies at the place of separation between them—for if the slightest inroad beyond the limit be admitted, it is tantamount to a surrender of the cause. We know that the anti-apocryphalists of the day have been accused of too fiercely resenting the encroachments that have been attempted on the canon and inspiration of Scripture, and that, on the plea of the encroachments being slight ones. We shall say nothing of the resentment;

but, however slight those encroachments may have been, they could not be too strenuously or too energetically resisted. The truth is, that on every conflict of principle, it is at the line of demarcation that the battle must be fought, and that the battle is terminated. Should the charm and the sacredness be broken, by which the margin of an else inviolable territory is guarded, the whole length and breadth of the sanctuary lie open to spoliation; and unless the assault be repelled at the breach, all the goodness within may at length be trodden under foot of the invaders. What is true of nations in the gladiatorship of arms, is true of principles in the gladiatorship of argument. Should a hostile army plant one footstep within the landmarks of a kingdom, this is enough to arouse a sensitive and high-minded people in vengeance on the aggressors; and that, though no part of the country is seized, but the boundary is passed. And so in the controversy before us. It is the part of Christians to rise like a wall of fire around the integrity and inspiration of Scripture; and to hold them as intact and inviolable as if a rampart were thrown around them, whose foundations are on earth and whose battlements are in heaven. It is this tampering with limits that destroys and defaces everything; and therefore it is precisely when the limit is broken, that the alarm should be sounded. If the battle-cry is to be lifted at all, it should be lifted at the outset; and so on the first mingling, by however so slight an infusion, of things human with things Divine, all the friends of the Bible should join heart and hand, against so foul and fearful a desecration.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### ON THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE AS A CRITERION FOR THE CANON AND INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

1. IN arguing for the inspiration of Scripture, the right order of proof seems to be the following. There is a collection of sacred writings, acknowledged as such both by Jews and Christians, which, from the days of Christ and His apostles, has been designated by certain titles, appropriated to that collection, and to it exclusively—insomuch that these titles have in them all the force and distinction of a proper name. It is under one or other of its proper names, by which it is individualized and separated from all other writings. that this collection is so often re-



ferred to in the New Testament—where the properties of infallibility and inspiration are distinctly and repeatedly awarded to them. This forms the main proof of the inspiration of a certain aggregate or collection of writings—after which, the question of the inspiration of any particular book or writing resolves into the question, Whether or not it had a place in this collection, or whether or not at the commencement of the Christian era it formed part of the canon of the Old Testament? This last is a question which we might either be prepared with beforehand; or which we might determine afterwards, when our proofs for the inspiration of that general book, termed Scripture or Scriptures, have been completed. The inspiration of Scripture in the gross rests chiefly on the testimony of Christ and His apostles. The inspiration of particular books or portions now in Scripture rests chiefly on the evidence that they belong to the canon, or in other words, that they were also then in Scripture; for then they must have been included in the sanction given by the founders of the Christian religion to Scripture, and to all Scripture. When any particular book is thus sanctioned, and so admitted to speak for itself, there is often a mighty addition given to the evidence for its inspiration, in its own averments now made credible—when it tells, as is frequently done, in a variety of forms and expressions, not that thus saith the human author, but that “thus saith the Lord.” Beside, then, the general question of inspiration, the question of the canon is indispensable, to ascertain what the particular books are to which the credit of inspiration should be given. The question of inspiration determines the homage which is due to Scripture in the general; and the question of the canon determines what the particular books are to which this homage should be rendered. We must have recourse to the one question when we want to establish the amount of deference or submission that we owe to Scripture at large. We must have recourse to the other question when we want to establish whether this deference be due to any certain specified book, whether in or out of our present Scriptures. The two questions of the inspiration and the canon stand related to each other as do the members of the following syllogism.—All Scripture is given by inspiration of God: The book of Proverbs is part of Scripture: Therefore the book of Proverbs is given by inspiration of God. It is by rightly determining the general question of the inspiration that we are enabled to state rightly the major proposition. The minor proposition is determined by the canon.

2. The evidence, then, on which the canonicity of any book in Scripture rests is clearly an external evidence—that is, external, if not to the whole Bible, at least to the particular book in question. We derive our information and belief of its place in Scripture from the testimony of others beside its own author,—from the various references which can be found to it whether scriptural or ex-scriptural—from the authority of ancient catalogues—or, lastly, from the concurrence both of Jews and Christians, even to this present day, in its favour. Now all these proofs for the canon of the Old Testament are clearly external; and that evidence is still more palpably so by which we establish the canon of the New Testament. When we look to the goodly succession of those testimonies which have determined the canon of these later Scriptures, we find that one and all of them are external; and this character applies to each distinct head of argument given on this subject by Dr. Paley. Let us exhibit them in order, only extending what he says of the historical to all the books of the New Testament. “1st, The books of the New Testament are quoted or alluded to by a series of Christian writers, beginning with those who are contemporary with the apostles, or who immediately followed them, and proceeding in close and regular succession from their time to the present.” “2d, When the Scriptures are quoted or alluded to, they are quoted with peculiar respect, as books *sui generis*; as possessing an authority which belonged to no other books, and as conclusive in all questions and controversies amongst Christians.” “3d, The Scriptures were in very early times collected into a distinct volume.” “4th, Our present sacred writings were soon distinguished by appropriate names and titles of respect.” “5th, Our Scriptures were publicly read and expounded in the religious assemblies of the early Christians.” “6th, Commentaries were anciently written upon the Scriptures; harmonies formed out of them; different copies carefully collated; and versions made of them into different languages.” “7th, Our Scriptures were received by ancient Christians of different sects and persuasions, by many heretics as well as catholics, and were usually appealed to by both sides in the controversies which arose in those days.” “8th, The four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, thirteen epistles of St. Paul, the first epistle of John, and the first of Peter, were received without doubt by those who doubted concerning the other books which are included in our present canon.” “9th, Our historical Scriptures were attacked by the

early adversaries of Christianity, as containing the accounts upon which the religion was founded." "10th, Formal catalogues of authentic Scriptures were published, in all of which our present sacred histories were included, till at length when the information respecting them had spread sufficiently, and their claims were acknowledged throughout the Church at large, all our present New Testament Scriptures were included also." "11th. These propositions cannot be predicated of any of those books which are commonly called apocryphal books of the New Testament."—The reader will not fail to perceive that each of these considerations forms an external argument, or bears upon it the character of external evidence for the canon of the Old Testament.

3. But many writers, in arguing whether for the canonical rank or the inspiration of particular books, have appealed to internal evidence also. That is, over and above the statement which the author makes of a supernatural communication which he had received from God, they appeal to the scriptural quality of the communication itself. They reason for its being a Divine production, from the nature of the product; as if it were competent for man to discern such characters of truth and majesty and sacredness in the work itself, as bespeak the high and heavenly origin from which it has descended. They seem as if shut up unto this conclusion by a sort of felt necessity—as if the common people, who should have a reason also for the hope that is in them, and are utter strangers to the erudition of the external argument, must have access to the knowledge and belief of the inspiration of each particular book in some other way. And, as it is not anything without the book which forms their reason, it is imagined, if they have found a reason at all, they must find it in the book. There are several writers on the canon of Scripture who appear to have reduced themselves to this conclusion, by the manner in which they had urged the vital and fundamental importance of a well-grounded belief in the scriptural authority of every book that we receive as Scripture. And as the unlearned are ignorant of the external, there seems no other resource left for them, than that they must be guided and determined, in the homage which they render to the Divine authority of any book, by the internal evidence. And, accordingly, it has been argued of these pious and unlearned believers, that, in the perusal of Scripture, they have the taste and discernment of its inspired quality—in virtue of which, they could make dis-



tion, for example, between the Book of Proverbs as the genuine progeny of inspiration, and the Book of Wisdom or the Book of Ecclesiasticus as not so.

4. These writers seem to have involved themselves in a dilemma, or at least to have outrun the convictions of the intelligent in their speculations on this subject. To us it appears palpably incompetent for a reader, either learned or unlearned, to discriminate between all the genuinely scriptural, and all the apocryphal books in this way. But again, it is quite as obvious of the great majority of Christians, that neither have they sought for satisfaction in the other way, or by the study of the external evidence. Between the one and the other, it remains a question for solution—whether there be any real or rational ground of evidence for the faith of the common people.

5. This question, substantially at least, if not in one particular form, was much agitated in the days of the Reformation. Papists of course affirmed that the power of determination between canonical and apocryphal Scriptures lay with the Pope, or council; and that the people at large had no other way of distinguishing between them than by the decrees of the Church. The champions of Protestantism, in opposing such a high pretension of authority over the faith of the people in this question, behoved to find out a principle on which the people might determine it for themselves. It is obvious, that, if the scriptural authority of any particular book was made exclusively to rest on the testimonies of ancient times, they were only the learned who could be satisfied of this at first-hand; and still, as before, the few had to tell the many what books they were to receive as inspired, and what they were to reject. This had the appearance of popery in another form, inasmuch as the great bulk of the people still believed, or at least acquiesced, in certain books as Scriptures, at the dictation of others: And, to exalt the authority of private judgment over all other authority, it seemed necessary to find out some other principle than the historical evidence, on which it might be competent for all to form their own independent decision. And accordingly, among the Protestant writers of these days, we find it contended that the books of Scripture can only manifest themselves as such, by their own internal evidence, or powerful influence upon the heart—or even by the internal testimony of the Spirit to their divinity. It is the language of Whitaker, that “our Scriptures are to be acknowledged or received, not because the Church has appointed or

commanded so, but because they came from God; and that they came from God cannot be certainly known by the Church, but from the Holy Ghost." Even Calvin says, "All must allow that there are in the Scriptures manifest evidences of God speaking in them. The majesty of God in them will presently appear to every impartial examiner, which will extort our assent: So that they act preposterously who endeavour by any argument to begot a solid credit to the Scriptures—the word will never meet with credit in men's minds, till it be sealed by the internal testimony of the Spirit who wrote it." The following extracts by Jones, from certain Protestant confessions, are in the same strain. "These," say the compilers of the Dutch Confession, in 1566, "these we receive as the only sacred and canonical books, not because the Church receives them as such, but because the Holy Spirit witnesseth to our consciences that they proceed from God, and themselves testify their authority." The Gallican Church declares in their confession—not only that their general faith in Scripture depends on the testimony of the Spirit giving to the mind an internal persuasion of their truth; but that hereby also they know the canonical from the apocryphal books. In like manner Dr. Owen, in his Treatise on the Divine Original of Scripture, says "that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament do abundantly and uncontrollably manifest themselves to be the word of the living God; so that merely on the account of their own proposal to us, in the name and majesty of God as such, without the contribution of help or assistance from tradition, church, or anything else without themselves, we are obliged, upon the penalty of eternal damnation, to receive them with that subjection of soul which is due to the Word of God. The authority of God shining in them, they afford unto us all the divine evidence of themselves, which God is willing to grant to us, or can be granted to us, or is any way needful for us."—Now, it must be quite obvious, that, if left to this test alone, we could not, by the single virtue of its application, determine on the rightful place in Scripture, of all the thirty-nine books in the Old, and twenty-seven books in the New Testament. Let each individual be left to himself in this matter, with but this guidance only, and there could be no security, either that he admitted all that was right into his canon, or kept all that was wrong out of it. Richard Baxter seems to have thought more judiciously on this subject than some of his contemporaries. "For my part," says he, "I confess I could never boast of any

such testimony or light of the Spirit (nor reason neither) which, without human testimony, would have made me believe that the book of Canticles is canonical and written by Solomon, and the book of Wisdom apocryphal and written by Philo, &c. Nor could I have known all, or any historical books, such as Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, &c., to be written by Divine inspiration, but by tradition," &c. There is obviously then a confusion of sentiment on this subject, and amongst theologians of highest name—a mixture of truth and error, which error, at the same time, is but truth misapplied, or a right principle carried to extravagance. By a right statement of the order of proof, we think that the whole of this perplexity might be unravelled, and the question be adjusted in all its parts.

6. A book in Scripture might be made the subject of two distinct affirmations—one belonging to the history of the book, the other to its character or properties. It may be said of it, that it has been regarded as Scripture from the earliest times—and by those too most competent to judge of its title to a place in the collection. Or it may be said of it, that it has the power of so influencing the heart, and so convincing the judgment both by its adaptations to human nature and by its harmonies with the general system of revealed truth—that, when these are fully manifested, they evince its authorship to be of God. These propositions are distinct; but they are not incompatible. And each may be tested by a proper and peculiar evidence of its own. The one, if true, is an historical truth; and the way to ascertain it is by an examination of the testimonies of ancient times. The other, if true, is an experimental truth; and to ascertain it, it must be made the subject of a present and a personal trial. There can be no doubt that he who has made full application of the first of these ordeals to the book in question, and with a satisfactory result, has a much firmer ground on which to rest its canonicity than the authority of the Church. On the arena of this investigation, the learned among the Protestants have held contest with the learned among the Catholics, and made full proof of their superiority. They have vindicated the high prerogatives of reason; and, appealing to the documents of past ages, soundly and critically estimated, they can give a reason for their faith.

7. But the question still remains, Can any rational origin be assigned for the faith of the common people?—or, Is it by a



rational process at all that they have been led to it? When they believe that the book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament, or the Epistle to the Hebrews in the New, is the word of God—do they not believe this at the telling of another, of the minister or of the Church to which they belong? And at this rate, how can we get quit of authority and of blind assent in matters of religion? Do we not behold it of extensive influence in all denominations—and, whether among Protestants or Catholics, has it not a principal share in upholding the Christianity of the world?

8. There is a principle which we have laboured to unfold in another place;\* and its application to our present question, is to us a new demonstration of its value. Long before the certainties of a subject have become so manifest as to compel our belief, its likelihoods may from the very first be such as to form a rightful claim upon our attention. To be convinced of the reality of this distinction, we have only to consider the state of mind at the outset of every successful inquiry issuing in full conviction, and the state of mind at the termination of it. Long anterior to the exhibition of those undoubted verities which command our faith, there might be that aspect of verisimilitude which calls for our most serious and respectful examination. Insomuch that, with but the semblance of truth in any given proposition, with but this chance in its favour and consequent hazard of doing violence to some rightful demand on our faith or obedience by putting it away from us, we might incur the guilt of a moral unfairness by our summary rejection of it; and so the condemnation of our resulting unbelief, not because we refused our assent in opposition to the ultimate proofs, but simply because we refused our attention to the incipient probabilities of the subject, might have a clear moral principle to rest upon it.

9. The Church tells her people that the book of Proverbs is an inspired composition. Whatever faith the people may give to this announcement, it is not yet faith upon evidence—nor, in this state, has it all the properties of that faith which is unto salvation. But here lies the difference between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. The former is satisfied with this blind and unhesitating faith on the part of its members, and seeks for no other; nay, throws a barrier in the way of any other, if not by a prohibition to read the Scriptures, at least by

\* See our Natural Theology, Book I. chap. ii.

the discouragement which it casts on the exercise of private judgment. Now that reading of the Sacred Volume, which the Catholic Church forbids or discountenances, the Protestant Church inculcates. If the authority of the one Church be employed in preventing the use of the Scriptures, the authority of the other is employed in enjoining the use of the Scriptures. The compliance of the people with this mandate may argue a sort of general faith, but not the saving faith of the gospel. They may read their Bibles because they are bidden, or they may attend to them because they are bidden; but they do not and cannot, in the full sense of the term, believe in them because they are bidden. The whole effect of the Church's authority is to bring the minds of its people into contact with the subject-matter of Christianity; but, for the proper belief of Christianity, this subject-matter must recommend itself by its own proper evidence; it must manifest its own truth to the consciences of those who are giving earnest heed unto it, and who persevere in this earnestness till the day dawn and the day-star arise in their hearts.

10. The pupilage of a well-ordered country under the influence of an efficient Church, is the same in all the essential steps of it with the pupilage of a well-ordered family under the control of religious parents. Neither the people of the one, nor the children of the other believe at the dictation of their superiors. This is not a possible thing—nor is it in the order of the human faculties; but it is quite a possible and a frequent thing that, in compliance with this dictation, they should make diligent use of their Bibles, and so that their minds shall be in daily converse with the doctrines and informations of the sacred record. To this length, then, the natural authority of parents in a family, or the acquired authority of clergymen in the Church, might bring the subjects on whom they have respectively to operate—whether they be the children of a household or the population of a country at large. They may have been conducted to the habit both of going to church, and of reading their Bibles. In virtue of the moral suasion which is brought to bear upon them, their hearts may have been solemnized; and they may have been led to a serious, and respectful, or even reverential entertainment of the topics which are addressed to them. But, for the purpose of carrying their conviction, these topics must recommend themselves. They must give demonstration of their own reality; and this can be done by evidence alone—at length

discovered by the inquirer as the fruit of his assiduous perusals, or at length brought home to him by the Spirit in answer to his prayers.

11. Now through the whole of this process, we can perceive nothing but the right and the rational in any of its footsteps; and nothing certainly which should prevent a most legitimate and well-grounded conviction at the last. Unless there be a glaring evil or absurdity, either in the parental or in the ecclesiastical requisition, there might be the guilt of a moral hardihood—if, either a child in the one case, or an unlettered peasant in the other, shall bid reckless defiance to it. In their incipient state, it might be their incumbent obligation to read as they are bidden—which, for aught they know, might be their first footstep on that path which leads both to truth and to duty. There is real virtue in the docility, whether of men or children, to those superiors whom providence has set over them; and the obligation, instead of being neutralized by the obvious wrongness of the injunction, may in fact be increased and strengthened by the obvious rightness of it. When bidden, in particular, to read their Bibles—this book might not only have a verity which shall be fully manifested at the last, but a verisimilitude palpable to the eye and impressing the conscience of the observer, even on the first and earliest regards which he casts upon it. It is an example of the moral light preceding the argumentative—of that call on the attention that is justified by the probabilities of a subject, which comes before that demand on the belief that is only justified by the sufficient exhibition of its proofs. We again appeal to those characters of sacredness and morality and truth, which sit on the aspect of the Bible; and, with obviousness enough at least, to challenge our further examination, and most certainly to condemn our summary rejection of it. We cannot blame either the child or the peasant, if, at the outset, either shall refuse to us their faith; but both are most worthy of blame, if they refuse to us that obedience which sets them on the way that leads to faith. In short, the Christian education of a country, when conducted in the spirit, and according to the methods of Protestantism, is essentially the same process and having the same footsteps with the Christian education of a family. Both are liable to the same theoretical objection on the principles of Rousseau;\* and both admit of the same practical and the same philosophical vindication.

\* See our *Natural Theology*, Book I. chap. ii. art. 22.



12. Now apply this to our present question. A given book in Scripture may be either canonical and inspired, or it may not. If the former, then this inspiration, viewed as a fact, may be ascertained historically; or, viewed as a property, may be ascertained experimentally. A person unlearned may not attempt the *investigation* competent only to a scholar; but, depending on the authority of his Church proceeding on the integrity of the Bible which is in his hands, and told that all is inspired and all is profitable, he, in the act of devoutly reading the part of the Bible in question, makes the *trial*—a competent thing to every humble and conscientious inquirer. If he be the disciple of a Church which admits the Book of Proverbs into its canon, and it be right in so doing, he will taste the fruits of its actual inspiration in its moral and spiritual effect upon himself; and this perhaps made so distinct, as to give him the perception of its celestial origin. If he belong to a Church which admits the Book of Wisdom into its canon, and it be wrong in so doing, the consequence is that in the reading of it he loses his labour; he is misled into a waste of attention and effort which yields him no fruit unto life everlasting. He may still acquiesce in the telling of his Church; but he himself has no personal manifestation of it. But though what is counterfeit in his Bible may be useless or may be hurtful to him, yet what is genuine in his Bible may still have made him wise unto salvation. The one, like wood, hay, and stubble, will be found to have been of no profit; the other, like gold, silver, and precious stones, may have so rewarded the search and the labour after saving knowledge, that he himself may be saved.

13. These two probations, the historical and the experimental, coincide in their result; yet it is of the utmost importance that, between them, there shall be a right order of precedency. We do not say that the same individual should always attempt both; for if he be unlearned, he is capable only of one of these methods. It is not for him to attempt first the historical, and then the experimental probation; but for his practical guidance, it seems indispensable that others for him should have made the historical, and then that he should try the experimental on those books which they have put into his hands. The experimental probation might verify the actually inspired books; but it never could have discovered them. Had there been no history and no tradition regarding the sixty-six pieces of our present collection; and if, instead of being bound up in one volume, and handed

down as a collection of Sacred Writings, they had lain scattered throughout the multitudinous authorship of the world—then, if left to no other test than the quality of these compositions, we never, by means of this criterion alone, could have made our way to them, or found them all out. It makes all the difference in the world when the search is defined and limited to a certain number of books for the purpose of verification—instead of our being cast abroad on the interminable sea of all authorship; and there left to our own measures, or to steer as we may for the purpose of discovery. The question, Are these inspired books?—is a truly different one from the question, What books are inspired? To satisfy the former question, the moral and experimental probation might be altogether competent—while utterly powerless so to guide the inquirer, as that he shall be able to cull and to select the few writings which are inspired, out of the mighty and numerous host which lie around him. It is by the historical probation that we *discover* the authorship of the Bible and of all its parts—even as at the termination of the Middle Ages we discovered the authorship of Homer, and Virgil, and Cicero. It is by the experimental probation that we *verify* this authorship.

14. In these circumstances, we must perceive the importance of a Church, as an institute for the secure and copious transmission of the records of inspiration. Even though in centuries of corruption and darkness, the use of or demand for the Scriptures should have so far subsided, as that all the copies of them, which, in better times, might have been found throughout the habitations of the people, had either been destroyed by the hand of violence, or perished by their own natural decay,—the same causes of extermination did not take full effect in those numerous establishments which had been raised for the maintenance and accommodation of ecclesiastics, by the piety or the superstition of other times. They were, in fact, the monks and men of various sacred orders in the Christian Church, who performed the same service in behalf of the Scriptures, which, under the old dispensation, was done by the priests and Levites of Israel. It is true, that they partook in the general lethargy of the period; and very many of them made little or no use of their sacred records—yet it is well that these found an asylum in the bosom of convents; and were suffered to lie, though perhaps to lie unread, in places of keeping, respected even through the days of fiercest barbarism, and where, if not useful, at least they were

safe. And we know that light and learning did not undergo a total extinction among the ecclesiastics of Christendom—inso-much that to their numerous transcriptions, we mainly stand indebted both for those manifold copies of the Bible, and those precious relics of ancient literature to which the mind of Europe awoke at the commencement of the Middle Ages. It is thus that the Scriptures were piloted across this thick and dreary millennium, and that with hundredfold greater certainty and abundance than were the best and most respected classics of Greece and Rome. In other words, at the revival of learning, the learned of the priesthood had a hundredfold better materials for the determination of their questions respecting the genuineness and authorship of the Sacred Writings, than the learned of general society had for the genuineness and authorship of all other writings. To the Jewish and the Christian Churches respectively were committed the oracles of God : and so adapted were both institutes, even in spite of the numerous corruptions into which they fell, for the safe custody and the sure transmission of them—that, greatly beyond all the other memorials of past ages, have the Old Testament on the one hand, and the New Testament on the other, descended on a firmer historic pathway, and with a far surer light of historical evidence by which to identify and recognise them.

15. Now, at the commencement of the great disunion which took place in Christendom, when the old Papal hierarchy was rent asunder, and new Churches sprung into existence—the controversy did not begin with the unlearned of the people, but with the learned of the priesthood. And in settling the public articles of their respective establishments, more especially the books which they should receive and submit to as the directory of their faith, they were the facts of history, and the external evidence grounded thereupon, which formed the proper weapons of their warfare—as much so, indeed, as prophecy and miracles formed the great means by which the Jewish and Christian dispensations obtained their first acceptance in the world. And, in determining between genuine and apocryphal Scriptures, as between those works of Peter by which though dead he yet speaketh, and the spurious compositions of an impostor, they had to proceed on external evidence, even the evidence of testimony—just as much as the superiority of the living Peter over Simon Magus, was vindicated by the palpable superiority of his miracles, or by an external evidence, even the evidence of the senses. The



fathers of Protestantism in the work of reforming theology, had the same sort of evidence to proceed upon, with a hundred times greater amount and certainty thereof, in ascertaining both the written relics and the actual state of primitive Christianity—that the great parents of the revival of learning had, in ascertaining the relics and the state of ancient literature. The same documentary evidence which awoke the mind of Europe to a purer literature, also awoke it to a purer Christianity, and what the discovery of a Bible did to Luther, that great restorer of a better theology, the discovery of a Virgil may perhaps have done to some restorer of a better learning. An impulse no doubt may have been given to each from the subject-matter of their respective volumes, from the elevated doctrine of the one, from the noble and graceful poetry of the other; but the proper track of investigation to which it carried them both, in their search, whether after the sacred or the secular compositions of other days, was altogether an historical one. This, more particularly, was the right and proper ground for the founders of the Reformation to travel on—in determining between the genuine and the counterfeit, on the great question which be the oracles of God. In the settlement of this, it was with the manuscripts and memorials of other times that they had properly to do, which had been preserved from the wreck of ages, and which Providence had put into their hands. The controversy was held in an upper region. The decision, in the first instance, was in the hands of the learned; and it was for them, on the foundation too of an historical evidence, to fix the canon of Scripture, or to tell the Church at large which be the genuine Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. They, by means of the historical probation, made discovery of these; and it was left for the people, by means of the experimental probation, to make verification of them. Calvin ante-dated the matter wrong, when, in his controversy with the learned of the Church of Rome in behalf of the Scriptures, he made appeal to that internal evidence which is felt and appreciated by the unlearned—at the time when, fighting his adversaries with their own weapons, he should have urged the argument critically and historically. He has charged it as preposterous, to plead this argument distinct from the internal evidence. But we should reverse the proposition, and call it preposterous in this matter, to place the internal before the external evidence.\* In the Christianization of individuals, the

\* Paul cautions the churches against counterfeit epistles as from him; and, to distinguish  
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experimental probation is the only one resorted to, and the only one realized by the great majority of the household of faith. But in laying the foundations of a Christian Church, and in rearing the munitions of its external security—the historical probation must be resorted to. They who “walk about Zion, and go round about her, telling the towers thereof, and marking well her bulwarks,” speak to us chiefly of the historical or external evidence that leads to the determination of the Scriptures. They again who consider and devise for the interior culture of her vineyard, for the work of her parishes, and the religion of her people, speak to us chiefly of that internal and experimental evidence, that finds development and effect in their afterward reading of the Scriptures which have been put into their hands. By this process, the historical probation takes the precedency; the experimental follows it. It is the combination of these which forms the strength and the glory of Protestantism. By the first of them is made the glorious discovery of books, which, seen in the lights of erudition, shine upon us with evidence of a hundred-fold greater splendour than all the other literature and history of ancient times. By the second of them, the books thus presented to the Church, when left to do their own proper work on the consciences of men, when their lessons are devoutly studied by the people and pressed home with unction and energy by an efficient clergy from the pulpits—then, in the Christian wisdom and moral superiority of a well-trained peasantry, the glorious discovery is followed up by a still more glorious verification.

16. In some books of Scripture, the internal evidence may lie deeper beneath the surface than in others—when a more frequent and thorough digging will be requisite, to obtain discovery of the hidden treasure—the fruit of assiduous perusals and earnest prayers. At the first and superficial aspect, there seems little or no difference between the Book of Wisdom and the Book of Proverbs—so that it is not at one glance only, that we can perceive the human quality of the one, the Divine quality of the other. Yet however little distinguishable at once in respect of their internal, there are no books more distinguished from each other in respect of their external evidence. It is a

his own genuine ones from these, he set a particular mark on them. (2 Thess ii. 2, and iii. 17.) It is a felicitous remark of Jones, “If it be, as Calvin says, preposterous to endeavour by any solid argument to beget a solid credit to the Scriptures, distinct from their internal evidence, then it was certainly preposterous in St. Paul to add that mark to his epistles, as an evidence they were his.”

striking remark of Michaelis, that "the canonical authority of no part of the Old Testament is so ratified by the evidence of quotations, as the Book of Proverbs; but it is remarkable that the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach, which has so striking an affinity with the Book of Proverbs, is not quoted in a single instance by apostles and evangelists; and the difference between canonical and apocryphal is nowhere so strikingly marked as in this example."\* The right order of procedure, then, in regard to this book is, that, ascertained to be Scripture by the learned—it was given as such by them to the unlearned—many of whom, in the course of their patient and devout reading, would find a mine of sacred truth in the one composition, which they never could have found in the other. And whether or not they have formally recognised it, from its internal character, to be the handiwork of God—the Book of Proverbs has been a fountain of high and heavenly wisdom to the Christian peasant, who, in many instances, has attained to the relish and often to the perception of its sacredness.

17. Had the respective functions and relative places of the external and internal evidence been sufficiently pondered by Dr. Pye Smith,† he would not have fallen into the error that he has committed, when asserting the non-inspiration of the Song of Solomon—and that, too, in the face of the strong external evidence which it possesses in common with all the other Scriptures of the Old Testament. It is preposterous to put the internal before the external in this question. If he have ventured too much, who pronounces by internal evidence alone, and in the absence of the external, on the divinity of the Book of Wisdom—he surely adventures too much, and at a still more fearful hazard, who, in the abundance of its external evidence, would pronounce on the humanity of the Song of Solomon. A summary approval in the one case is surely not more premature than a summary rejection in the other. In neither instance is the heavenly or the earthly parentage sufficiently obvious, in looking merely to the books themselves to preclude the consideration of the external evidence; or to strip that evidence of its prerogative and rightful power for the determination of the question. It would bespeak, we think, not only a more pious but a more philosophic docility to leave that book in undisturbed possession

\* Marsh's "Michaelis." Fourth edition. Vol. i. pp. 207, 208.

† See his exposition, among the very best we have, of his Scripture evidences for the divinity of Christ.



of the place which it now enjoys—where it might minister, as in ages heretofore, to the saintly and seraphic contemplations of the advanced Christian, who discovers that in this poem a greater than Solomon is here, whose name to him is as ointment poured forth, and who, while he luxuriates with spiritual satisfaction over pages that the world has unhallowed, breathes of the ethereal purity of the third heavens as well as their ethereal fervour.

18. There are various analogies by which the process that actually takes place, and as we have now explained it, for the Christian education of a people, might be both illustrated and vindicated. They do certain things at the telling of others; and, in virtue of so doing, they are made to behold certain truths, not with the eyes of others, but with their own eyes. From between what they take on trust and what they are made in consequence to see for themselves, a right and rational belief emerges at the last.

19. On the authority of an almanac all men expect with confidence the next coming eclipse. Whatever might be said of the philosophy of this general expectation, it is universally felt by us, that, not to share in it would argue not a soundness, but a perversity of intellect. At all events, the greater part of men look for the predicted event as they have been told; and, in the act of looking to it, they obtain a demonstration of its reality at first-hand. As they have heard so they have seen. What the learned could predict by one medium of proof, they, the unlearned, can now perceive by another medium of proof. And, in like manner, what the learned on the authority of one medium of proof, even the external evidence, pronounce to be Scripture and of Divine origin—the unlearned, by another medium of proof, might at length believe on the authority of their own observation. When once the manifestations of the internal evidence have taken effect on them, they might say with the Psalmist of old, “As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of our God.”\*

20. There are very many who believe in the facts and objects of Astronomy, yet without any other evidence for them than the testimony of scholars and scientific men. If told to go to an observatory, and by means of the instruments there to view the ring of Saturn or the satellites of Jupiter for themselves—there may be certain hypocritics of kindred disposition with those

\* Psalm xlviii. 8.

who sustain the cause of our modern infidelity, and who might contend that ere they attained a warrantable belief in the reality of these objects, they must attain a scientific acquaintance with the medium of proof through which they are beheld. It might be easily shown, however, that without having mastered a single demonstration in optics, one might acquire, and on the very principles which enter into the education of the senses, the same confidence in the intimations of the telescope that he has in the intimations of the eye. So that he who went to an observatory at the bidding of a friend, discovered for himself what he had previously been told of by others; and he who, at the bidding of a parent or a minister, makes a Bible the object of his daily repair and daily exercise, may at length find that what before was only probable on the likelihood of another's testimony is now palpable to his own vision.

21. We have long thought that, in the education of artists, there is a beautiful and effective illustration of the same process—an actual experience of the most eminent in that department, admitted by many of them as a fact, though we have not yet met with an adequate or philosophical explanation of it in any of their writings. What we advert to is the difficulty which a young practitioner or student of painting would find, if, placed amid a large and indiscriminate collection of pictures, he was left to discover the works of the best masters for himself; and how much it expedites the formation both of his judgment and his taste to be told of them beforehand, so as that he might limit his contemplations or his studies to the specimens of first-rate excellence which have been pointed out to him. The merits which he could not perhaps have discovered through a whole lifetime, he will, in the course of a few weeks, come to discern. He at length shares in the general taste and feeling of the connoisseurs, and that not at the bidding or on the authority of others, but with a just and well-grounded perception of his own. It is most instructive to mark the respective parts which the external and internal evidence have in this process; and how, by acting at first at the bidding or on the testimony of his informers, when they told him which the works were of Raphael and Rubens, and Vandyck and Titian—he is landed incalculably sooner than if he had been abandoned to himself, not in a factitious but in an honest and well-grounded admiration of their respective beauties.\* Now all we affirm is, that what has been found ex-

\* See Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses, in three volumes, second edition. London,

perimentally, both to originate and to expedite the solid education of an artist, might originate and expedite too the solid education of a Christian. If the former is better of being told beforehand what the works are which men of a heaven-born genius have executed—the latter is better of being told, in like manner, what the books are which prophets and apostles under the guidance of heavenly inspiration have written. It is by an external evidence, that the knowledge of both sorts of productions is transmitted from generation to generation; but it is by an internal evidence that the disciples of each generation are formed—whether in the schools of art or in the schools of religion. There is no overbearing of the human faculties, no prostration of mind to authority or to the mandates of an earthly superior—in either of the processes. All that authority does is, not to bid us believe; but to bid us attend and to point out the objects of attention. It is well that, in virtue of so many authentic collections, there is an external evidence by which we are enabled to point out rightly what may be termed the canonical pictures of other days. And it is in every way as well, that in virtue of so many churches in Christendom, each in itself a vast repository of ecclesiastical documents, we have a most abundant external evidence—by which we are enabled to point out rightly the canonical, and to distinguish them from the apocryphal Scriptures of other days. It is not, however, by force of the external but of the internal evidence, that the enamoured artist kindles into admiration of the great examples which are set be-

1798. We more particularly refer to his own narrative of his own experience given in p. xiv., &c., in the account of his life prefixed to his works. In his Second Discourse, vol. i. p. 38, he gives this advice to young artists—"With respect to the pictures that you are to choose for your models, I could wish that you would take the world's opinion rather than your own. In other words, I would have you choose those of established reputation rather than follow your own fancy. If you should not admire them at first, you will, by endeavouring to imitate them, find that the world has not been mistaken." In his twelfth Discourse, vol. ii. p. 95, he observes that "the habit of contemplating and brooding over the ideas of great geniuses, till you find yourself warmed by the contact, is the true method of forming an artist-like mind; it is impossible, in the presence of those great men, to think or invent in a mean manner—a state of mind is acquired that receives those ideas only which relish of grandeur and simplicity." Harris, the profound and philosophical author of *Hermes*, goes so far as to recommend that we should "even feign a relish till we find a relish come, and feel that what began in fiction terminates in reality."

If these things (and for ourselves we have no doubt of it) be in the order, and according to the real working of the human faculties, who does not see that the actual Christian education both of families and nations in every Protestant land where the Scriptures are freely and fully taught, argumented by the learned and read by the unlearned, is of efficacy for the diffusion among all classes of a rational and rightly-grounded faith?



fore him. Neither is it by force of the external but of the internal evidence that the Christian peasant kindles into admiration, and his heart burns within him when the great examples and lessons of the sacred record are opened to his view. Neither may have even so much as thought of the historical evidence for the authenticity of the works studied by the one with the devoutness of an amateur, of the writings studied by the other with the devoutness of a religionist. Both may be genuine and well-founded disciples of their respective schools notwithstanding. And thus it is that our Bible—our well-argued and well-authenticated Bible—has proved an instrument for the solid education of millions who are strangers to every external argument on which the authenticity of the whole and of all its parts is vindicated. Of the outward credentials for the book they know nothing. They are the contents within the book to which we stand indebted for all the faith, and that not a superstitious but an enlightened faith, that exists in Christendom. It is to the reading of the Bible that we owe this result, as put into the hands of children by the fathers of families, or circulated under the auspices of its Church among the people of a kingdom.

22. Before bringing this subject to a close, we would remark the verisimilitude that sits on the canonical Scriptures, and constitutes a *prima facie* distinction between them and all the other religious compositions of the age and country in which they were written—we mean their freedom from a certain legendary character, and a certain untasteful extravagance, that is more or less to be detected in the Apocrypha; but which we think is most noticeable of all, when we make the transition from the Scriptures of the New Testament to the very earliest of the uncanonical writers on the side of Christianity. Take for an example the epistle of Clement when he argues, or at least tries to illustrate the doctrine of a resurrection from the story of the phoenix. No one but must have felt the utter incongruity of such a passage, if thrust into the middle of any argument whatever in the New Testament, on the subject of the resurrection. Conceive it, for example, subjoined to the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, or to the 4th chapter of the second epistle; and what a motley juxtaposition would have been produced by it! And the contrast is not confined to particular passages; for, throughout and in general character, there is an obvious and sustained dissimilarity—a sense and a dignity and an appropriateness in the one; and in the other, save when

there is a copious intermixture of Scripture quotation, or when the devoted piety breaks forth into an elevation and an earnestness which overshadows all the accompaniments, there is an extravagance and a weakness and a fanciful style both of illustration and argument, which makes us feel that we have got into the hands of very illiterate or very unpractised authors.

23. Now, to understand how this should be, we must consider that Christianity is responsible only for its own proper work on the affections and the principles of those over whom it hath obtained a practical ascendancy. By means of certain great truths which it impresses on the belief and understanding of man, it exerts an influence upon his heart and upon his history; and the supreme love of God, along with the love of his neighbour, become the prevailing characteristics of him who before was a selfish and ungodly creature. But while it thus revolutionizes the spiritual part, it may leave the natural economy of the taste and the intellect untouched. Abstracting from the moral change, it may no more alter the complexion of his mind than it alters the complexion of his face; and just as the person and the features and habitudes of walk or gesture may remain what they were before, so also may the mental peculiarities of his constitution remain unaffected—even after Christianity, with all its subduing power over the will and the conduct, has been grafted upon the inner man.

24. It is a great mistake to imagine that Christianity, by taking the full possession and power over a number of men, overbears all the complexional varieties of character which formerly obtained between them. If there be any foundation for supposing that there is a reality in national distinctions of character, a thing of which we ourselves have no doubt—then a Christian Irishman is just as distinguishable from a Christian Scotchman, as they were previous to the accession of this ingredient. And what is true of the national, is just as true of many of the natural distinctions between men. Christianity does not obliterate the variety of tastes and temperaments among men. In the New Testament, this dramatic variety is exhibited, and a dramatic propriety is observed—so that the zeal of Peter, the argumentative vehemence of Paul, the tenderness of John, all shine forth either in their history or their writings—insomuch that if the whole earth were brought under a Christian economy, we are not therefore to imagine that all the phases of humanity would thereby be assimilated into one monotonous uniformity

of aspect ; or that human society would not be enlivened by as great and as graphic a variety as before.

25. Now what is true of the constitutional differences which nature has established between one man and another, is just as true of the artificial differences which civilisation and learning have established between one man or between one age and another. It is thus that in our more polished day, we look back to our ruder, yet not on that account our less religious forefathers ; and marvel both at what we should feel the offensive indecorum of their behaviour, and the offensive crudities of their authorship. A bishop, in the present day, stands in as much need of being put upon his guard against the heart-burnings and the jealousies of evil affection, as in the first ages of Christianity. Only then they carried the matter a little farther out ; and so the apostle, in enumerating the incumbent gravities and proprieties of a bishop, had to say among other things that he must be “no striker.” The same principle will account for what to us appears a flagrant breach of all decency, which the Corinthians fell into when assembled at the table of the Lord. And, in short, we mistake the matter entirely, we misapprehend the proper fruit and function of Christianity, we are not distinguishing the things which differ—if we expect, that because the religion of the gospel has taken powerful hold of the consciences of men in a barbarous age, that therefore all the vestiges of barbarism are forthwith to be obliterated.

26. But our present concern is with the conceits and the crudities and the puerile extravagances of an untasteful and unlettered age. Now it is no more the proper immediate effect of Christianity to teach men good taste, than it is to teach them good orthography. Every gross violation of morality will of course be abandoned by them ; but, should they have occasion to be writers, there may still be the grossest violation of all the proprieties in *belles-lettres*. If childishness and credulity and bad taste were their characteristics before the change, they might still remain their characteristics after it ; and, without any imputation either on the worth of their principles, or on their competency as witnesses to the palpable facts that are transacted before their eyes—they might, if not kept in check by a supernatural power, fall into manifold errors both of false argument and of false illustration. Clement’s bird of Arabia we hold to be a notable example of this ; and when one compares, either with his epistle or with the works of any of the



apostolic fathers, the compositions of the fishermen of Galilee ; when one recognises the chaste and graceful propriety of the latter—how pertinent throughout, and as predominant in sense as in sacredness—how free of all that is irrelevant or absurd or inconsequential—how unstained by any gratuitous folly or flight of extravagance—and yet how certain, that, if left to themselves, they would, like their immediate successors in the Church, have betrayed the waywardness of unpractised infancy at that work of authorship in which they were but infants—one cannot but feel that they wrote under some powerful hold which at once guided and restrained them ; and that, in the simplicity and purity and orderly keeping of all the parts in that venerable record, we have an internal evidence of as broad a distinction between the canonical and the uncanonical, as either the authority of the Church or the innumerable written testimonies of the Christian Fathers would serve to establish.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### ON THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF REVELATION.

1. IF the New Testament be a message from God, it behoves us to make an entire and unconditional surrender of our minds to all the duty and to all the information which it sets before us.

2. There is perhaps nothing more thoroughly beyond the cognizance of the human faculties than the truths of religion, and the ways of that mighty and invisible Being who is the object of it ; and yet nothing, we will venture to say, has been made the subject of more hardy and adventurous speculation. We make no allusion at present to Deists, who reject the authority of the New Testament, because the plan or the dispensation of the Almighty, which is recorded there, is different from that plan or dispensation which they have chosen to ascribe to Him. We speak of Christians who profess to admit the authority of this record, but who have tainted the purity of their profession by not acting when they ought upon its exclusive authority ; who have mingled their own thoughts and their own fancy with its informations ; who, instead of repairing, even in those questions of which revelation should have the entire monopoly, to the principle of “ what readest thou ? ” have abridged the sovereignty of this principle by appealing to others, which are

utterly incompetent, as the reason of the thing, or the standard of orthodoxy ; and so have brought down the Bible from the high place which belongs to it, as the only tribunal to which, in all matters beyond the cognizance of the human faculties, the appeal should be made, or from which the decision should be looked for.

3. But it is not merely among partisans or the advocates of a system, that we meet with this indifference to the authority of what is written. It lies at the bottom of a great deal of that looseness, both in practice and speculation, which we meet with every day in society, and which we often hear expressed in familiar conversation. Whence that list of maxims which are so indolently conceived, but which, at the same time, are so faithfully proceeded upon? "We have all our passions and infirmities; but we have honest hearts, and that will make up for them. Men are not all cast in the same mould. God will not call us to task too rigidly for our foibles; at least this is our opinion; and God can never be so unmerciful, or so unjust, as bring us to a severe and unforgiving tribunal for the mistakes of the understanding." Now, it is not licentiousness in general, which we are speaking against. It is against that sanction which it appears to derive from the self-formed maxims of him who is guilty of it. It is against the principle, that either an error of doctrine, or an indulgence of passion, is to be exempted from condemnation, because it has an opinion of the mind to give it countenance and authority. What we complain of is, that a man no sooner sets himself forward and says, "This is my sentiment," than he conceives that all culpability is taken away from the error, either of practice or speculation, into which he has fallen. The carelessness with which the opinion has been formed, is of no account in the estimate. It is the mere existence of the opinion, which is pleaded in vindication; and, under the authority of *our maxim*, and *our mode of thinking*, every man conceives himself to have a right to his own way and his own peculiarity.

4. Now this might be all very fair, were there no Bible and no revelation in existence. But it is not fair, that all this looseness, and all this variety, should be still floating in the world, in the face of an authoritative communication from God himself. Had no message come to us from the fountainhead of truth, it were natural enough for every individual mind to betake itself to its own speculation. But a message has come to us, bearing on its forehead every character of authenticity; and

is it right now, that the question of our faith, or of our duty, should be committed to the capricious variations of this man's taste, or that man's fancy? Our maxim, and our sentiment! God has put an authoritative stop to all this. He has spoken; and the right or the liberty of speculation no longer remains to us. The question now is not "What thinkest thou?" In the days of Pagan antiquity, no other question could be put; and the wretched delusions and idolatries of that period let us see what kind of answer the human mind is capable of making, when left to its own guidance, and its own authority. But we call ourselves Christians, and profess to receive the Bible as the directory of our faith; and the only question in which we are concerned is, "What is written in the law; how readeest thou?"

5. But there is a way of escaping from this conclusion. No man calling himself a Christian, will ever disown, in words, the authority of the Bible. Whatever be counted the genuine interpretation, it must be submitted to. But in the act of coming to this interpretation, it will be observed, there is room for the unwarrantable principles which we are attempting to expose. The business of a Scripture critic is to give a fair representation of the sense of all its passages as they exist in the original. Now, this is a process which requires some investigation; and it is during the time that this process is carrying on, that the tendencies and antecedent opinions of the mind are suffered to mislead the inquirer from the true principles of the business in which he is employed. The mind and meaning of the author who is translated, is purely a question of language, and should be decided upon no other principles than those of grammar or philology. Now, what we complain of is, that while this principle is recognised and acted upon in every other composition which has come down to us from antiquity, it has been most glaringly departed from in the case of the Bible: That the meaning of its Author, instead of being made singly and entirely a question of grammar, has been made a question of metaphysics, or a question of sentiment: That instead of the argument resorted to being, "such must be the rendering from the structure of the language, and the import and significancy of its phrases," it has been, "such must be the rendering from the analogy of the faith, the reason of the thing, the character of the Divine mind, and the wisdom of all His dispensations." And whether this argument be formally insisted upon or not, we have still to complain, that, in reality, it has, a most decided influence



on the understanding of many a Christian ; and in this way, the creed which exists in his mind, instead of being a fair transcript of the New Testament, is the result of a compromise which has been made betwixt its authoritative decisions and the speculations of his own fancy.

6. What is the reason why there is so much more unanimity among critics and grammarians about the sense of any ancient author, than about the sense of the New Testament ? Because the one is made purely a question of criticism : The other has been complicated with the uncertain fancies of a daring and presumptuous theology. Could we only dismiss these fancies, sit down like a schoolboy to his task, and look upon the study of divinity as a mere work of translation, then we would expect the same unanimity among Christians that we meet with among scholars and literati about the system of Epicurus or philosophy of Aristotle. But here lies the distinction betwixt the two cases. When we make out, by a critical examination of the Greek of Aristotle, that such was his meaning, and such his philosophy, the result carries no authority with it, and our mind retains the congenial liberty of its own speculations. But if we make out, by a critical examination of the Greek of St. Paul, that such is the theology of the New Testament, we are bound to submit to this theology ; and our mind must surrender every opinion, however dear to it. It is quite in vain to talk of the mysteriousness of the subject, as being the cause of the want of unanimity among Christians. It may be mysterious, in reference to our former conceptions. It may be mysterious, in the utter impossibility of reconciling it with our own assumed fancies and self-formed principles. It may be mysterious, in the difficulty which we feel in comprehending the manner of the doctrine, when we ought to be satisfied with the authoritative revelation which has been made to us of its existence and its truth. But if we could only abandon all our former conceptions, if we felt that our business was to submit to the oracles of God, and that we are not called upon to effect a reconciliation betwixt a revealed doctrine of the Bible, and an assumed or excogitated principle of our own ;—then we are satisfied, that we would find the language of the Testament to have as much clear, and precise, and didactic simplicity, as the language of any sage or philosopher that has come down to us.

7. Could we only get it reduced to a mere question of language, we should look at no distant period for the establishment

of a pure and unanimous Christianity in the world. But, no! While the mind and the meaning of any philosopher is collected from his words, and these words tried, as to their import and significancy, upon the appropriate principles of criticism, the mind and the meaning of the Spirit of God is not collected upon the same pure and competent principles of investigation. In order to know the mind of the Spirit, the communications of the Spirit, and the expression of these communications in written language, should be consulted. These are the only data upon which the inquiry should be instituted. But, no! Instead of learning the designs and character of the Almighty from His own mouth, we sit in judgment upon them, and make our conjecture of what they should be, take the precedency of His revelation of what they are. We do Him the same injustice that we do an acquaintance whose proceedings and whose intentions we venture to pronounce upon, while we refuse him a hearing, or turn away from the letter in which he explains himself. No wonder, then, at the want of unanimity among Christians, so long as the question of "What thinkest thou?" is made the principle of their creed, and, for the safe guidance of criticism, they have committed themselves to the endless caprices of the human intellect. Let the principle of "What thinkest thou?" be exploded, and that of "What readest thou?" be substituted in its place. Let us take our lesson as the Almighty places it before us; and, instead of being the judge of His conduct, be satisfied with the safer and humbler office of being the interpreter of His language.

8. Now this principle is not exclusively applicable to the learned. The great bulk of Christians have no access to the Bible in its original languages; but they have access to the common translation, and they may be satisfied, by the concurrent testimony of the learned among the different sectaries of this country, that the translation is a good one. We do not confine the principle to critics and translators; we press it upon all. We call upon them not to form their divinity by independent thinking, but to receive it by obedient reading; to take the words as they stand, and submit to the plain English of the Scriptures which lie before them. It is the office of a translator to give a faithful representation of the original. Now that this faithful representation has been given, it is our part to peruse it with care, and to take a fair and a faithful impression of it. It is our part to purify our understanding of all its previous con-

ceptions. We must bring a free and unoccupied mind to the exercise. It must not be the pride or the obstinacy of self-formed opinions, or the haughty independence of him who thinks he has reached the manhood of his understanding. We must bring with us the docility of a child, if we want to gain the kingdom of heaven. It must not be a partial, but an entire and unexcepted obedience. There must be no garbling of that which is entire; no darkening of that which is luminous; no softening down of that which is authoritative or severe. The Bible will allow of no compromise. It professes to be the directory of our faith, and claims a total ascendancy over the souls and the understandings of men. It will enter into no composition with us, or our natural principles. It challenges the whole mind as its due, and it appeals to the truth of heaven for the high authority of its sanctions. "Whoso addeth to, or taketh from, the words of this book, is accursed;" is the absolute language in which it delivers itself. This brings us to its terms. There is no way of escaping after this. We must bring every thought into the captivity of its obedience; and, as closely as ever lawyer stuck to his document or his extract, must we abide by the rule and the doctrine which this authentic memorial of God sets before us.

9. Now, we hazard the assertion that, with a number of professing Christians, there is not this unexcepted submission of the understanding to the authority of the Bible; and that the authority of the Bible is often modified, and in some cases superseded by the authority of other principles. One of these principles is the reason of the thing. We do not know if this principle would be at all felt or appealed to by the earliest Christians. It may perhaps by the disputation or the philosophizing among converted Jews and Greeks, but not certainly by those of whom Paul said, that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called." They turned from dumb idols to serve the living and the true God. There was nothing in their antecedent theology which they could have any respect for,—nothing which they could confront, or bring into competition with the doctrines of the New Testament. In those days, the truth as it is in Jesus came to the mind of its disciples, recommended by its novelty; by its grandeur; by the power and recency of its evidences; and, above all, by its vast and evident superiority over the fooleries of a degrading Paganism. It does not occur to us, that men in these circumstances would ever think of sitting in judgment over the mysteries of that sublime faith which had



charmed them into an abandonment of their earlier religion. It rather strikes us that they would receive them passively ; that, like scholars who had all to learn, they would take their lesson as they found it ; that the information of their teachers would be enough for them ; and that the restless tendency of the human mind to speculation, would for a time find ample enjoyment in the rich and splendid discoveries which broke like a flood of light upon the world. But we are in different circumstances. To us, these discoveries, rich and splendid as they are, have lost the freshness of novelty. The Sun of Righteousness, like the sun in the firmament, has become familiarized to us by possession. In a few ages, the human mind deserted its guidance, and rambled as much as ever in quest of new speculations. It is true, that they took a juster and a loftier flight since the days of heathenism. But it was only because they walked in the light of revelation. They borrowed of the New Testament without acknowledgment, and took its beauties and its truths to deck their own wretched fancies and self-constituted systems. In the process of time, the delusion multiplied and extended. Schools were formed, and the ways of the Divinity were as confidently theorized upon as the processes of chemistry or the economy of the heavens. Universities were endowed, and natural theology took its place in the circle of the sciences. Folios were written, and the respected luminaries of a former age poured their *a priori* and their *a posteriori* demonstrations on the world. Taste, and sentiment, and imagination, grew apace ; and every raw untutored principle which poetry could clothe in prettiness, or over which the hand of genius could throw the graces of sensibility and elegance, was erected into a principle of the Divine government, and made to preside over the counsels of the Deity. In the meantime, the Bible, which ought to supersede all, was itself superseded. It was quite in vain to say that it was the only authentic record of an actual embassy which God had sent into the world. It was quite in vain to plead its testimonies, its miracles, and the unquestionable fulfilment of its prophecies. These mighty claims must lie over and be suspended till we have settled—what ? the reasonableness of its doctrines ! We must bring the theology of God's ambassador to the bar of our self-formed theology ! The Bible, instead of being admitted as the directory of our faith upon its external evidences, must be tried upon the merits of the work itself ; and if our verdict be favourable, it must be brought in, not as a help to our ignorance, but

as a corollary to our demonstrations! But is this ever done? Yes! by Dr. Samuel Clarke, and a whole host of followers and admirers. Their first step in the process of theological study is to furnish their minds with the principles of natural theology. Christianity, before its external proofs are looked at or listened to, must be brought under the tribunal of these principles. All the difficulties which attach to the reason of the thing, or the fitness of the doctrines, must be formally discussed, and satisfactorily got over. A voice was heard from heaven, saying of Jesus Christ, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." The men of Galilee saw Him ascend from the dead to the heaven which He now occupies. The men of Galilee gave their testimony; and it is a testimony which stood the fiery trial of persecution in a former age, and of sophistry in this. And yet, instead of hearing Jesus Christ as disciples, they sit in authority over Him as judges! Instead of forming their divinity after the Bible, they try the Bible by their antecedent divinity; and this book, with all its mighty train of evidences, must drivel in their ante-chambers, till they have pronounced sentence of admission, when they have got its doctrines to agree with their own airy and unsubstantial speculations.

10. We do not condemn the exercise of reason in matters of theology. It is the part of reason to form its conclusions, when it has data and evidences before it. But it is equally the part of reason to abstain from its conclusions, when these evidences are wanting. Reason can judge of the external evidences for Christianity, because it can discern the merits of human testimony; and it can perceive the truth or the falsehood of such obvious credentials as the performance of a miracle, or the fulfilment of a prophecy, or the marvellous agreements between the subject-matter of revelation, and previously or distinctly known truth. But one of the most useful exercises of reason is, to ascertain its limits, and to keep within them; to abandon the field of conjecture, and to restrain itself within that safe and certain barrier which forms the boundary of human experience. However humiliating we may conceive it, it is this which lies at the bottom of Lord Bacon's philosophy; and it is to this that modern science is indebted for all her solidity, and all her triumphs. Why does philosophy flourish in our days? Because her votaries have learned to abandon their own creative speculations, and to submit to evidence, let her conclusions be as painful and as unpalatable as they will. Now all that we want,

is to carry the same lesson and the same principle into theology. Our business is not to guess, but to learn. After we have established Christianity to be an authentic message from God upon those historical and experimental grounds on which the reason and experience of man entitle him to form his conclusions, nothing remains for us but an unconditional surrender of the mind to the subject of the message. We have a right to sit in judgment over the credentials of Heaven's ambassador ; but we have no right to sit in judgment over the information he gives us. We have no right either to refuse or to modify that information, till we have accommodated it to our previous conceptions. It is very true, that if the truths which he delivered lay within the field of human observation, he brings himself under the tribunal of our antecedent knowledge. Were he to tell us that the bodies of the planetary system moved in orbits which are purely circular, we would oppose to him the observations and measurements of astronomy. Were he to tell us that in winter the sun never shone, and that in summer no cloud ever darkened the brilliancy of his career ; we would oppose to him the certain remembrances, both of ourselves and of our whole neighbourhood. Were he to tell us that we were perfect men, because we were free from passion, and loved our neighbours as ourselves ; we would oppose to him the history of our own lives, and the deeply-seated consciousness of our own infirmities. On all these subjects we can confront him. But when he brings truth from a quarter which no human eye ever explored ; when he tells us the mind of the Deity, and brings before us the counsels of that invisible Being, whose arm is abroad upon all worlds, and whose views reach to eternity, he is beyond the ken of eye or of telescope, and we must submit to him. We have no more right to sit in judgment over his information, than we have to sit in judgment over the information of any other visitor who lights upon our planet from some distant and unknown part of the universe, and tells us what worlds roll in those remote tracts which are beyond the limits of our astronomy, and how the Divinity peoples them with His wonders. Any previous conceptions of ours are of no more value than the fooleries of an infant ; and should we offer to resist or to modify upon the strength of these conceptions, we would be as unsound and as unphilosophical as ever schoolman was with his categories, or Cartesian with his whirlpools of ether.

11. Let us go back to the first Christians of the Gentile world. They turned from dumb idols to serve the living and the true



God. They made a simple and entire transition from a state as bad as, if not worse than, that of entire ignorance, to the Christianity of the New Testament. Their previous conceptions, instead of helping them, behoved to be utterly abandoned; nor was there that intermediate step which so many of us think to be necessary, and which we dignify with the name of the rational theology of nature. In those days this rational theology was unheard of; nor have we the slightest reason to believe that they were ever initiated into its doctrines, before they were looked upon as fit to be taught the peculiarities of the gospel. They were translated at once from the absurdities of Paganism to that Christianity which has come down to us in the records of the evangelical history, and the epistles which their teachers addressed to them. They saw the miracles; they acquiesced in them, as satisfying credentials of an inspired teacher; they took the whole of their religion from his mouth; their faith came by hearing, and hearing by the words of a Divine messenger. This was their process, and it ought to be ours. We do not see the miracles, but we see their reality through the medium of that clear and unsuspecting testimony which has been handed down to us. We should admit them as the credentials of an embassy from God. We should take the whole of our religion from the records of this embassy; and, renouncing the idolatry of our own self-formed conceptions, we should repair to that word, which was spoken to them that heard it, and transmitted to us by the instrumentality of written language. The question with them was, What hearest thou? The question with us is, What readeest thou? They had their idols, and they turned away from them. We have our fancies; and we contend that, in the face of an authoritative revelation from heaven, it is as glaring idolatry in us to adhere to them, as it would be were they spread out upon canvas, or chiselled into material form by the hands of a statuary.

12. In the popular religions of antiquity, we see scarcely the vestige of a resemblance to that academical theism which is delivered in our schools, and figures away in the speculations of our moralists. The process of conversion among the first Christians was a very simple one. It consisted of an utter abandonment of their heathenism, and an entire submission to those new truths which came to them through the revelation of the gospel, and through it only. It was the pure theology of Christ and of His apostles. That theology which struts in fancied demon-

stration from a professor's chair, formed no part of it. They listened as if they had all to learn : we listen as if it was our office to judge, and to give the message of God its due place and subordination among the principles which we had previously established. Now these principles were utterly unknown at the first publication of Christianity. The Galatians, and Corinthians, and Thessalonians, and Philippians had no conception of them. And yet, will any man say, that either Paul himself, or those who lived under his immediate tuition, had not enough to make them accomplished Christians, or that they fell short of our enlightened selves, in the wisdom which prepares for eternity, because they wanted our rational theology as a stepping-stone to that knowledge which came, in pure and immediate revelation, from the Son of God ? The gospel was enough for them, and it should be enough for us also. Every natural or assumed principle, which offers to abridge its supremacy, or even so much as to share with it in authority and direction, should be instantly discarded. Every opinion in religion should be reduced to the question of, What readest thou ? and the Bible be acquiesced in, and submitted to, as the alone directory of our faith, where we can get the whole will of God for the salvation of man.

13. But is not this an enlightened age ? And, since the days of the gospel, has not the wisdom of two thousand years accumulated upon the present generation ? Has not science been enriched by discovery ?—and is not theology one of the sciences ? Are the men of this advanced period to be restrained from the high exercise of their powers ?—and because the men of a remote and barbarous antiquity lisped and drivelled in the infancy of their acquirements, is that any reason why we should be restricted, like so many school-boys, to the lesson that is set before us ? It is all true that this is a very enlightened age ; but on what field has it acquired so flattering a distinction ? On the field of experiment. The human mind owes all its progress to the confinement of its efforts within the safe and certain limits of observation, and to the severe restraint which it has imposed upon its speculative tendencies. Go beyond these limits, and the human mind has not advanced a single inch by its own independent exercises. All the philosophy which has been reared by the labour of successive ages, is the philosophy of facts reduced to general laws, or brought under a general description from observed points of resemblance. A proud and a wonderful fabric, we do allow ; but we throw away the very instrument by

which it was built the moment that we cease to observe, and begin to theorize and excogitate. Tell us a single discovery which has thrown a particle of light on the details of the Divine administration. Tell us a single truth in the whole field of experimental science which can bring us to the moral government of the Almighty by any other road than His own revelation. Astronomy has taken millions of suns and of systems within its ample domain ; but the ways of God to man stand at a distance as inaccessible as ever ; nor has it shed so much as a glimmering over the counsels of that mighty and invisible Being, who sits in high authority over all worlds. The boasted discoveries of modern science are all confined to that field within which the senses of man can expatiate. The moment we go beyond this field they cease to be discoveries, and are the mere speculations of the fancy. The discoveries of modern science have, in fact, imparted a new energy to the sentiment in question. They all serve to exalt the Deity, but they do not contribute a single iota to the explanation of His purposes. They make Him greater, but they do not make Him more comprehensible. He is more shrouded in mystery than ever. It is not Himself whom we see, it is His workmanship ; and every new addition to its grandness or to its variety which philosophy opens to our contemplation, throws our understanding at a greater distance than before from the mind and conception of the sublime Architect. Instead of the God of a single world, we now see Him presiding, in all the majesty of His high attributes, over a mighty range of innumerable systems. To our little eye He is wrapt in more awful mysteriousness ; and every new glimpse which astronomy gives us of the universe, magnifies, to the apprehension of our mind, that impassable barrier which stands between the counsels of its Sovereign, and those fugitive beings who strut their evanescent hour in the humblest of its mansions. If this invisible being would only break that mysterious silence in which He has wrapt himself, we feel that a single word from His mouth would be worth a world of darkling speculations. Every new triumph which the mind of man achieves in the field of discovery binds us more firmly to our Bible ; and by the very proportion in which philosophy multiplies the wonders of God, do we prize that book on which the evidence of history has stamped the character of His authentic communication.

14. The course of the moon in the heavens has exercised astronomers for a long series of ages ; and now that they are



able to assign all the irregularities of its period, it may be counted one of the most signal triumphs of the modern philosophy. The question lay within the limits of the field of observation. It was accessible to measurement; and, upon the sure principles of calculation, men of science have brought forward the confident solution of a problem the most difficult and trying that ever was submitted to the human intellect. But let it never be forgotten that those very maxims of philosophy which guided them so surely and so triumphantly within the field of observation, also restrained them from stepping beyond it; and though none were more confident than they whenever they had evidence and experiment to enlighten them, yet none were more scrupulous in abstaining to pronounce upon any subject, where evidence and experiment were wanting. Let us suppose that one of their number, flushed with the triumph of success, passed on from the work of calculating the periods of the moon, to theorize upon its chemical constitution. The former question lies within the field of observation, the other is most thoroughly beyond it; and there is not a man whose mind is disciplined to the rigour and sobriety of modern science that would not look upon the theory with the same contempt as if it were the dream of a poet or the amusement of a schoolboy. We have heard much of the moon, and of the volcanoes which blaze upon its surface. Let us have incontestable evidence that a falling stone proceeds from the eruption of one of these volcanoes, and the chemistry of the moon will receive more illustration from the analysis of that stone than from all the speculations of all the theorists. It brings the question in part within the limits of observation. It now becomes a fair subject for the exercise of the true philosophy. The eye can now see, and the hand can now handle it; and the information furnished by the laborious drudgery of experimental men will be received as a truer document than the theory of any philosopher, however ingenious or however splendid.

15. At the hazard of being counted fanciful, we bring forward the above as a competent illustration of the principle which we are attempting to establish. We do all homage to modern science, nor do we dispute the loftiness of its pretensions. But we maintain, that however brilliant its career in those tracts of philosophy, where it has the light of observation to conduct it, the philosophy of all that lies without the field of observation is as obscure and inaccessible as ever. We maintain that to pass from the motions of the moon to an unauthorized specu-

lation upon the chemistry of its materials, is a presumption disowned by philosophy. We ought to feel that it would be a still more glaring transgression of all her maxims, to pass from the brightest discovery in her catalogue to the ways of that mysterious Being whom no eye hath seen, and whose mind is capacious as infinity. The splendour and the magnitude of what we do know, can never authorize us to pronounce upon what we do not know; nor can we conceive a transition more violent or more unwarrantable than to pass from the truths of natural science to a speculation on the details of God's administration or the economy of His moral government. We hear much of revelations from heaven. Let any one of these bear the evidence of an actual communication from God himself; and all the reasonings of all the theologians must vanish and give place to the substance of this communication. Instead of theorizing upon the nature and properties of that Divine light which irradiates the throne of God, and exists at so immeasurable a distance from our faculties, let us point our eyes to that emanation which has actually come down to us. Instead of theorizing upon the counsels of the Divine mind, let us go to that volume which lighted upon our world nearly two thousand years ago, and which bears the most authentic evidence that it is the depository of part of these counsels. Let us apply the proper instrument to this examination. Let us never conceive it to be a work of speculation or fancy. It is a pure work of grammatical analysis. It is an unmixed question of language. The commentator who opens this book with the one hand, and carries his system in the other, has nothing to do with it. We admit of no other instrument than the vocabulary and the lexicon. The man whom we look to is the Scripture critic, who can appeal to his authorities for the import and significancy of phrases; and whatever be the strict result of his patient and profound philology we submit to it. We call upon every enlightened disciple of Lord Bacon to approve the steps of this process, and to acknowledge that the same habits of philosophizing to which science is indebted for all her elevation in these later days, will lead us to cast down all our lofty imaginations, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

16. But something more remains to be done. The mind may have discernment enough to acquiesce in the speculative justness of a principle; but it may not have vigour or consistency enough to put it into execution. Lord Bacon pointed out the

method of true philosophizing ; yet in practice he abandoned it and his own physical investigations may be ranked among the most effectual specimens of that rash and unfounded theorizing, which his own principles have banished from the schools of philosophy. Sir Isaac Newton completed, in his own person, the character of the true philosopher. He not only saw the general principle, but he obeyed it. He both betook himself to the drudgery of observation, and he endured the pain which every mind must suffer in the act of renouncing its old habits of conception. We call upon our readers to have manhood and philosophy enough to make a similar sacrifice. It is not enough that the Bible be acknowledged as the only authentic source of information respecting the details of that moral economy which the Supreme Being has instituted for the government of the intelligent beings who occupy this globe. Its authenticity must be something more than acknowledged. It must be felt, and, in act and obedience, submitted to. Let us put them to the test. "Verily I say unto you," says our Saviour, "unless a man shall be born again, he shall not enter into the kingdom of God." "By grace ye are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." "Justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." We need not multiply quotations ; but if there be any repugnance to the obvious truths which we have announced to the reader in the language of the Bible, his mind is not yet tutored to the philosophy of the subject. It may be in the way, but the final result is not yet arrived at. It is still a slave to the elegance or the plausibility of its old speculations ; and though it admits the principle that every previous opinion must give way to the supreme authority of an actual communication from God, it wants consistency and hardihood to carry the principle into accomplishment.



LECTURES

ON

PALEY'S EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.



# LECTURES

ON

## PALEY'S EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

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IN entering upon this work, let me apprise you that, notwithstanding the generality of its title, "A view of the Evidences of Christianity," you are not to expect from it more than a complete argument on one branch of these evidences—the historical. Of this, however, he has given a most satisfactory compend, the best I do think in this or perhaps in any other language. The most imperfect division of this treatise is that which is taken up with the internal evidence, and he is brief and meagre on the subject of prophecy. On the whole, however, it is the best text-book I know for a theological class on the subject of the Christian Evidences; and we shall endeavour, as best we can, to supplement the deficiencies of those parts which one should have liked that the author had somewhat more extended.\*

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### PART I.—PROP. I.—CHAP. IX.—SECT. V.

THE SCRIPTURES WERE PUBLICLY READ AND EXPOUNDED IN THE RELIGIOUS  
ASSEMBLIES OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

#### THE PRAYER.

WE bless Thee, O God, that Thou hast called us both to a reasonable faith and to a reasonable service. Enable us to attain to the one, and to

\* The greater number of these supplementary observations which, in the course of his readings and examinations upon the text-book, Dr. Chalmers offered to his students, have either been amalgamated with his own earlier Treatise on the Evidences, and are to be found in the preceding pages, or are embodied in that section of the "Institutes of Theology" which is devoted to this subject. The following fragments which remain, have been thought worthy of being preserved.—*Ed.*



execute the other. Thou hast supplied us with abundant light and evidence for the first: Thou hast supplied us with abundant strength and meetness for the second. By the aids of Thy Spirit, O God, may we be conducted both to a right belief and to a right obedience! And more especially, having ascertained that Christ is indeed the Son of God, and the messenger from His throne, may we sit at His feet with the confidence and the docility of little children!

JUSTIN MARTYR, writing in the year 140, says, "The Memoirs of the Apostles," which he elsewhere calls *Gospels*, "or the writings of the Prophets, are read according as the time allows; and, when the reader has ended, the president makes a discourse, exhorting to the imitation of so excellent things." This is a strong warrant for preaching, as we shall take occasion to explain. It has been represented as a superseding of the Divine wisdom by human words. That the Scriptures were publicly expounded, as well as read, is proved by the fact, that when Origen went into Palestine, A.D. 216, he was requested to discourse and expound the Scriptures publicly in the Church. "This," says Origen, "we do, when the Scriptures are read in the Church; and when the discourse for explication is delivered to the people." Specimens of some of these commentaries on the New Testament, called "Homilies," publicly delivered by Origen, still remain. The word "homily" was formerly understood differently from its present acceptation. It then meant an address spoken to the people (*concio ad populum*); it now means what an exegesis does in Latin—a discourse, the object of which is to discuss a thesis or proposition in theology. The homilies of Origen do not appear to deserve the title of discourses to the people. They are rather argumentative than hortatory, and are tinged with much of the mysticism for which their author was peculiar.

Twenty years after Origen, Cyprian gives an account of his having ordained two persons, who had before been confessors, to be readers. When he mentions "confessors," we are not to suppose that he meant persons appointed to confess the people, according to the practice of Roman Catholics. They were persons who had themselves confessed Christianity at the hazard of their lives, and were, therefore, appointed to stations of honour in the Church. "Nothing," says Cyprian, "can be more fit than that he who has made a glorious confession of the Lord should read publicly in the Church—that he who has shown himself willing to die a martyr, should read the Gospel of Christ,

by which martyrs are made." Augustine, among many others, testifies to the public reading of the Scriptures in the churches—"where is a confluence of all sorts of people, of both sexes, and where they hear how they ought to live well in this world, that they may deserve to live happily and eternally in another." The only other books which appear to have been read in churches (and those only in a part of the latter) were the "Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians," and the "Shepherd of Hermas," which, though inferior to the canonical Scriptures, were the genuine writings of apostolic men.

The early and immemorial practice in the Christian Church of discoursing from a text or passage of Scripture, should not be lost sight of in the discussion of the very interesting question which relates to this subject—the question between the respective merits of reading the Word and preaching from the Word. Is not, it may be asked with a great appearance of plausibility—is not a substitution of the latter for the former, a substitution of man's wisdom for God's wisdom? Is it not the creature taking up a theme on which the Creator has already given a deliverance—as if from his mouth it could be propounded with greater effect than from the mouth of the Eternal?

Is not the usual Sabbath address from the pulpit of a half-minute text, with a half-hour sermon, a complete overlaying of that which is Divine by that which is human, and abandoning the *ipsissima verba* of inspiration for such thoughts as the minister may conceive, and such language as he may choose to convey them in? There can be no doubt that the lesson, whatever it may be, is differently put by the minister in his preaching from what it is put by God in the Bible; and the question is, Is it better put, or if not, is not the practice, now almost universal, of the Scriptures giving place so much as they do to sermons, a matter of undoubted mischief and loss to the Christian world?

Now, our first brief reply to this question—for we have not time to expatiate fully on the topic—rests on the very same principle with that on which you may recollect that I have already offered to vindicate systematic theology. It is true, that the minister has often to expound the meaning of a text, or, in other words, to make known the sense of the individual saying. But his main concern is with the relation of the saying both to other parts of Scripture and to the people who are before him. In propounding the first of these relations, he is rightly dividing the word of truth; in propounding the second of them, he is

giving to every man a word in season. Now the execution of this twofold task necessarily lands him in a sermon, whereof the materials are the doctrine of the text, and the application of the text. While acquitting himself of this task, he is not setting aside the volume of revelation, but profoundly studying it, just as the philosopher is intently studying the volume of nature, when he either groups his phenomena into principles, or brings these principles to bear on some useful application. I cannot afford at present to urge any other than very general considerations, but I shall hold it enough if you perceive that sermonizing may be vindicated on the very principle on which systematizing may be vindicated—that all which we have already alleged in defence of the one may be alleged in defence of the other—that if systems be profitable, then, for the very same reasons, sermons are profitable; and, on the other hand, if we find it to have been the custom from the first ages of the Church, not merely to expound, but to expatiate on a passage, then this of itself forms a distinct argument additional to any we have yet used in favour of systematic theology.

But there is more than this to be said for sermons. When put by the side of bare scriptural readings, it looks very plausible to say, that instead of drawing direct from the parent fountain, it is drawing from it by means of a stream that has passed through a medium of infirmity and error, or that it is taking the truth at second-hand, the light by reflection, when we might have had it by a powerful and primary radiance. Now this is not exactly the case. It follows not that in passing through the hands of an expounder, it should pass through a medium of error and distortion. He, in fact, is supposed to take on a far juster impression of the Bible, in its special passages, than any of the people whom he instructs, and to give back—which, by his more correct and comprehensive view of the whole, he may do with perfect accuracy by means of appropriate language—this impression to them. And then here lies the mighty charm and efficacy of the human expounder: it comes to us mingled with the sympathy of human affections, and increased by the energy of the living voice. The way in which Scripture both touched and affected one of our own kindred nature, passes by utterance from his heart into ours; and thus it is that there is no mode of conveyance more sanctioned both by Scripture example and by Scripture ordination for the lessons of Christianity, than that they should be made to pass from one human being to another.



Cornelius might have been instructed by one angel, but two angels were sent from heaven, one to him and another to Peter ; and all to arrange a meeting betwixt man and man upon the subject, and that Cornelius should receive the truths whereby he and his house were to be saved, from one that was flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. There is a force in the sympathy of kindred natures whereof Christianity does avail itself. The great instruments of its propagation are not Bibles alone, but Bibles accompanied with preachers. Men were commissioned to bear the tidings of the gospel through the world ; and we mistake the matter if we think not that within the limits of Christendom religion would speedily hasten to decay, if not to dissolution, were it not for the piety, and the earnestness, and the constant recurrence of those living appeals which come warm from the pulpits of the land. To graft an explanation and address upon a passage of Scripture seems to have been a practice in the synagogues of Judea, and was sanctioned by our Saviour Himself, who, after He had read a portion, was looked at by all the people in expectation of the customary address, and actually delivered one ; and, as far as tradition and testimony go, this has been a constant observance of the Church from the apostolic ages. In a word, one of the great appointed influences for the spread and the preservation of the gospel lies in the application of Christianized intellect and feeling on the part of one man, and that with a view of assimilating to his own the intellects and the feelings of those who are around him. It is thus that truth, indeed, from the very first, instead of coming in a state of abstract separation from all human accompaniments, has been supplied to the world through the medium of prophets and holy men of God, and at length most touchingly and powerfully of all by God manifest in the flesh, who spoke to us on earth in the form and with all the sympathies of a man. The argument could be extended. It is a worthy, and yet to a certain extent an original theme. Should any of you attempt it, you will find that it subserves the vindication not merely of oral but of written expositions, and that it will lead you to estimate the good done not merely by those preachings on Scripture superadded to the readings of Scripture, which are delivered in the congregations, but the good done by the superaddition of the books of Christian authorship to the books of original inspiration.

## PART I.—PROP. I.—CHAP. IX.—SECT. VII.

OUR SCRIPTURES WERE RECEIVED BY ANCIENT CHRISTIANS, OF DIFFERENT SECTS AND PERSUASIONS; BY MANY HERETICS AS WELL AS CATHOLICS; AND WERE USUALLY APPEALED TO BY BOTH SIDES, IN THE CONTROVERSIES WHICH AROSE IN THOSE DAYS.

## THE PRAYER.

WE rejoice, O God, that amid the conflict and diversity of human speculations, Thou hast come forth with an overbearing light from heaven upon our lower world. May we live by the powers of a coming death, of a coming judgment, of a coming immortality. May we no longer live here as if here we were to live for ever. May we no longer put death at a distance, or defer the urgent work of a preparation for eternity; but, to-day, while it is called to-day, may we harden not our hearts. And grant, that on every footstep of our pilgrimage, there may stand impressed the high character of a candidate for glory, immortality, and honour.

I think Paley wrong in saying that heretics bore only a small proportion to the whole Church. I think it will be found that they bore a very considerable proportion. The most extraordinary of them was Marcion, who flourished about the year 130, and who rejected the Old Testament, as proceeding from an inferior Deity, and erased from the New Testament every passage which recognised the Jewish Scriptures. Yet he published an expurgated edition of Luke's Gospel, containing all the leading facts, and everything necessary to authenticate Christianity. Basilides had adopted similar views as early as the year 120, yet he received the Gospel of Matthew, and, for aught that appears, the other three, and wrote a commentary on the evangelical story, so copious as to be divided into twenty-four books. The three most ancient topics of controversy in the Christian Church were, the authority of the Jewish constitution, the origin of evil, and the nature of Christ. So early as the year 200, there were writers who, like the Socinians of our own day, contended for the mere humanity of Christ, yet all acknowledged the Scriptures. Dr. Lardner goes through the list of heresies, and sums up the whole by observing, that those who espoused them "received most, or all the same books of the New Testament, which the Catholics"—or the general Christian Church—"received, and agreed in a like respect for them."

I may here advert for a little to the discredit which these con-

troversies have entailed on the Christian cause. It is painful to read of them ; and I am not sure whether Mosheim's *Church History* does not leave an impression behind it that is on the whole unfavourable to one's respect for religion. The truth is, that it is not a work animated by a spirit of piety or of great moral earnestness in behalf of the gospel, and, though written with great force and eloquence, is mainly a record either of the external progress of Christianity in the world, or of the internal politics of the Church, together with those melancholy aberrations from the simplicity and truth of Scripture which were the offspring of a wayward and wrong-headed philosophy. The puerilities, the exasperation about trifles, the subtle and scholastic controversies which interminably sprung up the one after the other, and kept the Christian world in fire and fury perpetual—these altogether form a most humiliating spectacle to the friends of Christianity, and have ministered food both for ridicule and triumph to the enemies of our faith. They have been the game of infidelity in all ages, and more especially in modern times ; and ere the spirit of religious dissension is indulged in, we should consider seriously how much it dries up the well-spring of vital Christianity within the limits of the Church, and what a prolific theme both of derision and of argument it puts into the mouths of gainsayers.

And yet there is, in spite of all the disputes, in all their endless ramifications that have vexed and agitated the professors of Christianity, there is a substantial oneness in this religion, whether we regard the objective oneness of it as exhibited in Scripture, or its subjective oneness as exhibited in the hearts and the principles of all true believers. To bring out the former, we have to expound and rightly to systematize the Old and New Testaments ; to bring out the latter, we have to trace the history of a Church very different indeed from that of Mosheim—not the nominal but the real Church, as composed exclusively of those who have lived under the power of the true faith, and abounded in the fruits of righteousness. Such a history has been conceived, and though not with first-rate talent or effect, yet, on the whole, has been respectably executed, by Milner ; and apart from its other recommendations as a work of deep piety, it certainly deserves to be read were it for no other purpose than to counteract the mischievous influence of Mosheim. It is delightful to trace his way, from century to century, in pursuit of the one specific object of vital godliness wherever it is to be found ; and it is



still more delightful to observe, that even in the ages of thickest spiritual and intellectual darkness, he never loses sight of it, but that each generation had its worthies; and however feebly the light of true piety and principle may have glimmered, it never was wholly extinguished. This is the secret, but the only substantial history of the Church of Christ; and when thus studying it, the unity, and consistency, and high importance of the faith are nobly vindicated. Christianity stands forth in characters of consistency and greatness when reflected from the pages of Augustine, or the dissertations of St. Bernard, or the devotional pieces of good Bishop Anselm, or the personal history and sufferings of the persecuted Waldenses. It is there we learn what sort of thing Christianity is; and when we behold the cardinal truths of the gospel embodied in the faith of men, and germinating all the cardinal virtues in their characters and lives, we then recognise, that instead of a fitful, capricious, and vacillating thing, distempered by passion and folly, and carried about with every wind of speculation, it has an indestructible character of identity and endurance which announces it the same in every country and every age, so that, like wisdom of old, it is justified of all its children.

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## PART I.—PROP. II.—CHAP. I.

THERE IS NOT SATISFACTORY EVIDENCE, THAT PERSONS PRETENDING TO BE ORIGINAL WITNESSES OF ANY OTHER MIRACLES, SIMILAR TO THOSE BY WHICH CHRISTIANITY IS SUPPORTED, HAVE ACTED IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE WITNESSES TO THE CHRISTIAN MIRACLES, IN ATTESTATION OF THE ACCOUNTS WHICH THEY DELIVERED, AND SOLELY IN CONSEQUENCE OF THEIR BELIEF IN THE TRUTH OF THOSE ACCOUNTS.

### THE PRAYER.

MAY Thy Spirit, O Lord, which guides to all truth, guide our inquiries both into the credentials and into the contents of Thy Word. Give us to recognise the hand of Thine ever-watchful providence in the transmission of the Sacred Record, with all its marvellous evidences and all its undoubted tokens both of purity and authority to later times. May we hold it not enough to recognise Thy Bible as the book of Heaven's communications to the world Deliver us from the guilt of those who let it lie beside them unread, unopened, unattended to; and as we read, may a light from on high shine upon all its pages.

I think that Paley underrates the strength of particularity as

an evidence of truth. He seems to express himself as if, previous to the admission of it as a proof, we must have anterior and independent ground for believing in the probity of the narrative. Now it appears to me, that without any conviction of this on separate reasons at all, the particularity itself may be such as to furnish decisive evidence of the probity—so that, though we know nothing from any external source or testimony of the author, we might infer from particularity alone the general truth of the narration, and the trustworthiness of him who framed it.

It is true, as he himself says, that the author of a studied and elaborate fiction might sustain—and for the sake of giving credibility to his imposture—a most minutely circumstantial character throughout his whole composition. But it is not at all likely that he would frame any other coincidences than those which might serve his purpose with the generality of readers; or any other than those which might flash their own broad and discernible evidence on a cursory perusal. We should not, for example, from under the surface of his narrative, be able to fetch such deep and hidden coincidences, as one out of ten thousand readers would not think of going in pursuit of. The truth of any complex or extended narrative does furnish those less obvious agreements—those recondite harmonies, such as will undergo a thorough sifting to the very bottom of the subject. But they are such harmonies as no impostor would ever think of laboriously constructing, seeing that he would not lay his account with being so laboriously tracked through all the depths and windings of his story; and accordingly, when the story is so tracked, and it leads to the discovery of many before latent adjustments, which had hitherto, and perhaps for whole centuries, escaped observation, it gives such an impression of undesignedness and such evidence of an original and well-founded truth in the history, as does of itself, and independent of all argument from any other quarter, warrant the conclusion of a substantial credibility in the narrative, and the substantial honesty of its author. A single writer, a single book of the New Testament, may be compared with itself, by the confronting and cross-questioning, as it were, of its different passages, and the argument I now speak of, for the probity of its author, be elicited therefrom. Or it may be compared with other histories, in its allusions to the polity, and customs, and history of the time at which it was published, and its minute coincidences in many nice and delicate parts with these, as has been done by Lardner, may impress the

same conclusion. Or it may even be the sustained accuracy of all its references to the localities of that land which is the scene of its history, an accuracy made out perhaps by painful research and interwoven with the whole texture of the composition, giving a well-grounded assurance of its being a record of actual doings and actual travellings. It is not likely that one Evangelist would have fabricated the circumstance of water issuing along with blood from the side of Jesus, seeing that not one out of ten thousand of his readers could know the consistency of this particular with anatomical truth. It is not likely that another, in telling the journey from Nazareth to Capernaum, would have devised the insertion of the single monosyllable, *down*, in the prospect of such a pleasing confirmation as Dr. Clarke has drawn from it when, travelling through the Holy Land, he remarked the striking graphical consistency of the places with the narrative. There is nothing but truth, artless truth, which could have generated such a host of symphonies as we gather from the observations of Harmer. Nothing but truth, on the one hand, could have stood the test of such a critical inquisition as the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles have been made to undergo; and it is utter extravagance, on the other hand, to imagine that an impostor, in the anticipation of being so closely and laboriously scrutinized, would, underneath that face of plausibility which he spread over his performance, to deceive vulgar eyes, have carried this work of unnatural violence downward among the arcana of the subject, and that for the purpose of blinding the judgment of critics and commentators for centuries to come. I will venture to say, that in the New Testament history, there are made out thousands of coincidences with other things wherewith that history may be compared, and which a fabricator would never have thought of;—coincidences of a very minute and statistical character with the geography of the country, in which transactions are reported to have taken place, or through which the actors in the history are represented to have travelled, and that may still be verified in modern times, as by Harmer and Clarke and others, who have explored those regions which form the scene of the New Testament history;—coincidences with sacred and general history, such as have been laboriously traced by Gray, and Prideaux, and Shuckford, and others;—coincidences with the known customs, and government, and economy, and various sects or institutions of the times, such as the assiduous Lardner has so amply supplied;—coincidences of



the historical with the moral and didactic pieces of the New Testament, as have been strikingly brought out by Dr. Paley himself, in one of his most original and masterly performances, the *Horæ Paulinæ*, where he confronts the Book of Acts with the Epistles of the great Apostle of the Gentiles ;—coincidences of the historical pieces with each other, as has been explained by Blunt ;—why, altogether they compose such a tissue and complication of evidence as, irrespective of any other proof for the integrity of the writers, is exceedingly difficult to resist, and which creates, not only a strong prepossession, but really a strong conviction in favour of the general truth of the whole. I have already adverted to another attempt for the eliciting of evidence from the comparison of Scripture with Scripture by Graves, who writes a book on the Pentateuch, and who institutes a cross-examination between Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers on the one hand, and Deuteronomy on the other. Neither he nor Blunt have made out so impressive an argument as Dr. Paley. They did not possess such good materials as he did ; but you will do well to remark, that in as far as all three have succeeded, they have brought out an evidence from the comparison, not of what is within the record to what is without, but from a comparison of one part of the record with another, so that, in as far as they have succeeded, they have shown that there is a self-evidencing power in the Bible.

Paley classes Colonel Gardiner's vision among instances of false perception. There is a distinction, however, to which Dr. Paley afterwards adverts, though he seems to have forgotten it in the present instance, between a miracle for the purpose of evidence to others, and a miracle whose sole terminating object is the conviction of him before whom it is performed. The vision may not be a sufficient credential for the founder of some new species of proselytism, and yet it may be sufficient for the individual benefit of him who is the subject of it. In the case of Colonel Gardiner, the miracle, if miracle it really was, was presented exclusively to himself, and was certainly, too, of that momentary character which Dr. Paley includes among the other disqualifications upon which he would set aside the authority of an alleged miracle as being a voucher for a new system of religion. And yet though Colonel Gardiner was not sufficiently furnished, in virtue of a conceived supernatural visitation, to carry the conviction of others as if he had been charged with a message to them, there may have been quite enough in it to carry, and

most rightly and legitimately, too, his own conviction that the message had at least come to himself. Now I should hold it unphilosophical to pronounce an absolute sentence of rejection on a story of this sort. There is the utmost difference between the kind of evidence which would be required to satisfy an individual that he had been made the object of a personal address from the upper sanctuary, and the kind of evidence that would be required to satisfy others of his being invested with the prophetic office for the purpose of authoritatively addressing to them a revelation of the will of God. In the one case he is the object of the message; in the other case he is the bearer of it. The evidence that would suffice, and ought to suffice, for convincing him that there is no delusion, may not be enough for convincing others that there is no delusion. The external light about which, with the conscious possession of his senses, he assuredly felt that there was no deception; the voice that he heard, and whose articulations he could distinctly follow; the text of Scripture suddenly and powerfully suggested, and which bore to his mind the great master principle that wielded the ascendancy over him, and brought relief to all his difficulties and all his fears; the intimate experience that he had of a change in the state of his heart and in the whole drift of his inclinations, now shifted from the things of sense to the things of sacredness—these may be known, and indubitably known, to the person himself; they may to him carry as much proof and persuasion along with them as the most palpable miracles, and yet with the power of working these palpable miracles he would need to be invested ere he could assume with effect the office of a prophetic messenger to others. We grant, on the one hand, the need of such palpable miracles to accredit a revelation which is addressed generally to the world; but, on the other hand, we hold it unphilosophical in positive terms to deny the possibility of such secret and special revelations as are narrated by Doddridge in the case before us. In the spirit of Butler we would say, that for aught we know they may be true, and be attended with such evidence as is enough to awaken and convince an individual, though not enough to accredit a prophet. The operation of the internal or experimental evidence is liable to the same ridicule, and with as little reason.

To pass from the account of such visitations as those experienced by Colonel Gardiner to the account of an ordinary conversion effected according to the doctrine of our Church, and, as

we believe, according to the doctrine of Scripture, by the influence of the Holy Spirit on him who is the subject of it; it is well known that Dr. Paley's sentiments underwent a change on the subject of this great transition in the history of every Christianized mind, and one could almost guess that the passage now before us was written previous to that change. He admits, no doubt, that the faith which is wrought by the influences of the good Spirit, though resting on no external proof, may be on grounds convincing to the persons themselves; but in stating that the credibility of such revelations "stands upon their alliance with other miracles," he expresses the thing too generally. Their own credibility to others may not, but their credibility in themselves, and to him who is the subject of the influence in question, may, on strictly rational grounds, admit, we think, of the fullest vindication. It is true that in this process there is nothing addressed to the outward senses, but there may be most satisfactory notices addressed to a faculty which takes still more intimate and immediate cognizance of things—we mean the faculty of consciousness, what Dr. Thomas Brown calls the faculty of internal observation. A man, for example, who went, in the reading of his Bible, to be nauseated by its phraseology, or repelled by the aspect of hopeless and unmeaning mysticism which overspreads its pages, and at the same time a man who, in a state of moral insensibility and blindness to the guilt of living in the habitual disregard of God, felt no responding echo in his heart either to the scriptural denunciation of guilt or to the scriptural offers of reconciliation—just conceive of such a man that he was, in the first instance, made alive to the enormity of his practical atheism, and that, when pursued by the agonies of present remorse and the terrors of the coming vengeance, he found in the word of God both a faithful mirror of his own felt sinfulness and the manifestation of a remedy altogether suited to his wants and to his fears; suppose, after such a change of view and of sentiment brought about by no logical or laborious process that he was conscious of, but landing him in this consequence—that he now saw a pertinence and a power and a weight of application and meaning in thousands of texts which had before escaped his observation, that he perceived a multiple light cast and reflected from one part of the volume to another, and above all, a variety of most precious adaptations to the state of his own heart and character, so as to draw from it a never-failing comfort in all his spiritual distresses, and the most appli-



cable counsel and confirmation in the midst of every difficulty—the reality of such a change as this may be as palpable to him as any of the realities of the outer world, because though not to be seen by the eye of the body, yet seen by the eye of internal observation. Now without the intermedium either of a vision or of a voice, this felt revelation in himself may be to him the most warrantable evidence of a visitation on his spirit by the Spirit of God. It is very true that he is in contact with nothing but the tablet of his own heart on the one hand, and the tablet of Scripture upon the other. But his power of consciousness has of late been made so much more vivid and discerning, and he in consequence knows himself so much better than before, and his power of apprehending the Bible has also been so much invigorated, and he can now behold so many more of the wondrous things contained in God's law, and the accordancies between the former, which is the internal, and the latter, which is the outward tablet, have of course multiplied so much upon his observation, that altogether he may be impressed, and we think soundly and justly impressed, by a Divinity in the book which all the historical and argumentative evidence that accompanies it may have never before impressed upon him. Now in that book we are told of the Spirit of God, and how He acts not directly but mediately on the hearts of men; how the Word is the great instrument of all His demonstrations; and how in addressing the truth to the mind, He tells us not any truth which is placed without the limits of the record, but illuminates and makes palpable the truth which has occupancy there. We believe that such will be the fruit of all sustained and abiding moral earnestness when directed to the study of the Bible, the result of your repeated perusals and your persevering prayers, that in this way the truth, though not argumented on literary or historical grounds, will become manifest to your consciences; and as the effect of the good spiritual influence, not so available we will admit for the conviction of others, but most completely and conclusively available for your own conviction, you will arrive, and justly arrive, at the same deliverance respecting the Bible which the Corinthians of old pronounced on some of its then living penmen: this book tells all the things that are in the heart, and makes manifest the secrets which be within it; verily God is in it of a truth.

As to the instances of false miracles referred to in Chapter II., I must here refer you to Campbell. He gives a fuller and more

satisfactory account of those miracles than Dr. Paley does. I wonder that our author takes no notice of him. I think that Campbell is not sufficiently appreciated in England. His was a mind of a very high order—shrewd, and subtle, and dexterous beyond most men in the warfare of argument. He completely demolished Hume's false argument, which is a different work you will observe from that of setting up a true argument on its right and proper basis. I regard him in calibre of intellect and talent to be the first name that the Church of Scotland has to boast of, and think he is very far from being treated with justice by the writers of our sister kingdom. He is a man of prodigiously larger dimensions than Beattie, who was so idolized in the South as the restorer both of reason and Christianity against the attacks of a philosophical and a religious scepticism. Beattie's Essay on Truth is a performance, I do think, of great merit; but the author of the Philosophy of Rhetoric, of the Essay on Miracles, and of the Preliminary Dissertations to the translation of the Four Gospels, shines a greatly brighter star in our literary hemisphere. I do not altogether comprehend the neglect and silence of Paley in regard to him, nor yet the contempt, I had almost said the insolence, of Bloomfield—a person who, notwithstanding the value in many respects of his laborious compilation, the *Recensio Synoptica*, is infinitely beneath Campbell in the depth and the philosophy of Scripture criticism. I suspect that England feels as if it owed him a grudge, for he has exposed with singular felicity and power its own favourite doctrine of the indelibility of the clerical character in the transmission of it from one age to another since the days of the apostles. My own feeling of Campbell is, that in respect to the wisdom of the letter, he was one of the greatest men that ecclesiastical literature can boast of. There is the wisdom of the Spirit, which the Bible distinguishes from the wisdom of the letter. It becomes me not to pronounce on the personal Christianity of any individual; but I can discern few or no traces of warm and devoted attachment on the part of Dr. Campbell to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, and I do think that his professional ministrations on the whole were suited to shed a blight (and a blight all the deadlier in proportion to his abilities) over one of the largest provinces of our land.\*

\* "Reid had a more vigorous and original mind than Stewart, and Campbell, I suspect, was superior to both. If Campbell had devoted his attention to mental philosophy, he could have done all that Reid or Stewart has accomplished; but neither of them could

## PART II.—CHAP. I.

## ON PROPHECY.

## THE PRAYER.

THOU, O God, reignest among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of this lower world. Thou lookest abroad over all space, yet overlookest not the humblest of Thy dependent family; but with a marvellous combination of power, which we can neither describe nor comprehend, Thou at once superintendest the government of this immense universe, and exercisest the most perfect vigilance and care over the meanest portions of it. Give us to maintain the habitual attitude of our soul's dependence upon God. May we know what it is to set Thee continually before us. May the sentiment—Thou, God, seest us—ever be present to our thoughts, and have an ascendant influence over all our deliberations and all our doings.

I cannot at this moment afford to expatiate on prophecy in a degree at all proportionate to the worth and importance of the theme, and must just pass it over in the same cursory way that Paley himself does. Let me in the meantime, however, recommend the following treatises to your perusal—Bishop Newton's *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, Hurd's *Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies*, Sherlock on the Use and Intent of Prophecy. In Marsh's *Divinity Lectures*, too, you will meet with something very instructive on this topic. Keith on Prophecy, too, though pleasing and popular, is not on that account a less valuable performance. I have already adverted to Davison's book on the same argument—a writer of great originality and strength, and whom the high culture of the highest English education has not chastened into feebleness. There is great vigour of conception imbedded in expressive phraseology, though at times obscure from elaboration. He well says of the argument from prophecy, "that it forms what may be considered a more complex subject of the evidences of religion, belonging at once to the Jewish and Christian revelations, more than any other part of the proof penetrating both, and opening a wide field of discussion in various directions." You will find in his

have written the 'Preliminary Dissertations' to his work on the Gospels."—*Conversational Remarks* by Robert Hall.—See *Works*, vol. vi. p. 123.—*Ed.*



volume great depth of reflection and novelty, as well as importance of remark. In addition to those works, or perhaps to some of you, in the meantime, as a substitute for these, I may mention that Horne gives a deal of information on this branch of the Christian Evidences, and that he will supply any deficiency of mine as to the recommendation of proper authors on the subject.

But before quitting the topic for the present, let me advert to a few of the more general questions and considerations which are involved in it. The actual comparison of specific prophecies with their respective fulfilments is at present out of the question, whether those fulfilments are recorded in Scripture or may be gathered from general history. For this I must refer you to the authors whom I have named, and indeed it is a matter more properly to be acquired by readings in the closet than by lectures from the Chair.

Suppose a prophecy to be fairly made out—that is, in the first place, a known promulgation of the prophecy prior to the event; secondly, the clear and palpable fulfilment of it; and thirdly, the nature of the event itself being such that when the prediction of it was given it lay remote from human view, and could not be foreseen by any supposable effort of reason, or be decided upon principles of collusion derived from probability or experience—then an accomplishment of this sort gives the same argument for a Deity being concerned in the professed revelation wherewith it is associated, as is afforded by an ordinary miracle—the one, in fact, being a miracle of knowledge, just as the other is a miracle of power.

One of the rash utterances of Gibbon upon this subject was, that a previous conviction of the Divinity of the prophecies was necessary, ere an argument could be founded on the accordancy between a prediction and the event. His fame as a historian drew an attention to his infidelity, which its own ingenuity or strength of reasoning by no means entitled it to. This assertion of his, in particular, on the subject of prophecy, has been met with a formality and an abundance of argument, which were altogether superfluous. It requires nothing, in fact, but a clear statement to disprove it. Give me a prediction uttered long enough before the event, and an accomplishment minute enough and harmonious enough with the prophecy to be clearly beyond the reach of human foresight, and it is just as decided an evidence of one being concerned in the matter whose know-

ledge was superior to that of men, as the accomplishment of a miracle at the word of command evinces the interposal of a being whose power is superior to that of men. There is something, I must observe by the way, that strikes me as peculiarly weak and superficial in the scepticism of Gibbon, and I feel that a very disproportionate attention has been given to him by some of our ablest writers in defence of Christianity. To satisfy you of the impotence of his reasoning, for example, on the subject of the rapid progress of Christianity being resolvable, as he would make it out, into natural causes, I should think it quite enough that you read a very few pages which Faber has bestowed on him in his work, entitled "The Difficulties of Infidelity." He is there met in a style of home-bred vigour, which completely oversets the pompous nothingness of his argument, and which, without the labour of any additional reading, makes you fully master both of the scepticism of this author, and of the reasoning by which it is overthrown.

But there is another very interesting general question on the subject of prophecy, and that is, Whether in any instance it is susceptible of a twofold interpretation. I am aware of the startling appearance which this theory has when first proposed, though I doubt not that an actual examination among the actual instances, will convince most people that there is a real ground for it in Scripture.

It may perhaps serve to reconcile you more to the conception of double prophecy, when you recollect that there is a meaning conveyed by action as well as by expression, and that in the early ages, when the arbitrary or artificial language had not attained to the copiousness and the power which it has in our present day, its defects were supplied by symbolical language. In point of fact, the prophets of the Old Testament were often commanded to prophesy by action; and on comparing the ritual of Moses with the explanations of a New Testament epistle—the Epistle to the Hebrews, we learn that the whole ceremonial law of the Jews was a symbolical language, which spoke to us of the future dispensation of the gospel. Knowledge was conveyed in those days, not through the medium of pronounced utterance alone, but through the medium of things and doings and historical personages: hence the legal types of the Levitical institute, which beautifully and expressively prefigured the realities of the Christian economy, after which, in fact, they were fashioned by Moses, who made all things according to the

pattern showed him in the mount : hence, also, the prophetical types, of which we have frequent instances in the Old Testament, as in Jeremiah making bonds and yokes, to prefigure the destruction of the kings against whom he prophesied ; and last of all, historical types, as when the persons and characters and fortunes of eminent individuals in the Old Testament, were the prefigurations of a like character or fortune of eminent individuals in the New, or rather of that one eminent personage, even Christ Jesus, the testimony of whom was the very spirit and design of all prophecy.

Now, conceive that instead of an historical personage or thing being declared a type at the time of their appearance, they had been made the subjects of prophecy before their appearance, then two futurities were involved in the prediction, first, the appearance of a person or an event which was the type ; and, secondly, the ulterior appearance of a person or an event which was the antitype. As, for example, in the prophecies that respected Solomon, the type of Christ, which occur in the Book of Psalms, or that remarkable prophecy which respected the destruction of Jerusalem—a type of the destruction of the world. The prophecy might glow and be animated in its representation of the nearer, with the prospect of the greater and more distant that was to follow—the description may be too exalted for the one, because it approximated to the surpassing greatness of the other. The prophet in his delineation of the type may have caught a colour and a glory from the antitype which it shadowed, and this I believe to be a theory which one is at length compelled to adopt, not from the mere plausibility which belongs to it in the statement, but from an actual examination of Scripture passages.

You will observe that this twofold application of prophecy only comprehends a certain number of the specific instances. If it be thought to hurt the simplicity and fairness of the argument, it should be remembered that many, I believe most of the predictions in the Bible, have but one direct and primary application ; but even when there is this double sense, it is really an utter mistake to imagine that this necessarily opens a door for the fanciful and the gratuitous in prophetic interpretation. The truth is, that when rightly conducted, it will be found that it fixes and ascertains a prediction more determinately than it has to meet as it were two conditions instead of one—that a harmony must be made out not only between it and a single separate sub-



ject, but a treble harmony, as it were—first between it and the nearer or typical event, then between it and the remote or anti-typical event, and last of all, between the type and the antitype. It is difficult to work a conviction of this in you without a special examination of the instances. I predict, as the fruit of that examination, that most of you will be experimentally or observationally shut up to a faith in the reality both of those double interpretations, and of the typical significancies between the symbol and the subject on which they are founded, and that so far from the evidence being impaired, it will grow of consequence both in strength and in beauty.

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## PART II.—CHAP. II.

### MORALITY OF THE GOSPEL.

#### THE PRAYER.

WE desire, O God, to give Thee thanks at the remembrance of Thy holiness. We are sensible that the only real and enduring felicity of our nature lies in a resemblance to Thyself. Enable us to make progress in the great object of that economy under which we sit, by recovering the lost image of the Godhead. For this purpose may we be studiously observant of the morality of the gospel of the New Testament, both as exhibited by the great Master of our religion, and as prescribed by His law. May we every day become more like to Christ, and thus become more like to God, seeing that He is the brightness, that He is the express image of Thy person. Be with us now and ever.

In the beginning of this chapter, Paley says, "If I were to describe in a very few words the scope of Christianity as a revelation, I should say that it was to influence the conduct of human life by establishing the proof of a future state of rewards and punishments—'to bring life and immortality to light.'"

I have had occasion to express my dissent from both of our text-books, and from their eminent authors, when I thought them meagre, which I think they often are, in their representations of the subject-matter of Christianity—a very possible thing truly, even on the part of its ablest and most efficient defenders against the assaults of infidelity from without. The two facts are in

many respects as distinct as the work of enclosing a vineyard is from the work of its internal cultivation. One may go round the walls of our Zion, and tell the towers thereof, though as yet unable to reveal the glories of the inner temple.

I do not object to the prominence, or, in one view, the pre-eminence he gives to the doctrine of a future life. No orthodoxy in all other respects would have compensated for the want of its revelation. No system of religion, however faultless in everything else, could have stood without it; for take away the doctrine of immortality, and though it may have remained as a system of truth, yet as a system of religion it would have been annihilated.

But while we fully admit that the great business of religion is to prepare for immortality, he, I greatly fear, wholly misrepresents the practical influences under which it is that this preparation is carried forward. According to his representation, it might appear that nothing more was wanted to put us in a right state of preparation, than just a reward great enough to lure us into virtue, and a punishment great enough to deter us from vice. I can conceive no other impression to be taken from his account of the matter than this, that all which was needed for giving a right impulse to humanity, was to furnish it with an adequate motive, and that motive was made adequate simply by sufficiently enhancing the remuneration for obedience, and sufficiently aggravating the penalty for transgression. It appears to me, as if in the mind both of Butler and Paley upon this subject, the great charm and efficacy of the doctrine of immortality lay in the multiple power which eternal had over temporal sanctions, and in that it proposed to man a better bargain for his services, a higher wage for the work which God put him to, a severer and more appalling chastisement, should he prove a remiss or an unfaithful labourer. At this rate, you will observe, the whole spirit of the legal economy is kept entire. There is no account taken of Christianity as a restorative system, or of that mediatorial economy under which the guilt of sin is expiated, and the power of sin is done away. All the anxieties and fears which attach to the condition—"Do this and live," abide in full force after such a statement; and I do think, that with no other guidance to the scope of the gospel than what is furnished in this passage by our author, we should miss altogether the great characteristic and leading peculiarity of the gospel.

What I should call the essence of the gospel is the revelation of that great event by which, after man had forfeited all his rights

and incurred the penalties of a broken law, these penalties were borne for him, and those rights again earned for him, by Him on whom the chastisement of his peace was laid, and who brought in an everlasting righteousness. He does not now work to make out his claim to heaven; but heaven, already his by a gift, offers the powerfullest incitements to work and to watch with all perseverance. He is distinctly informed that it is a place of holiness, and that none but those of congenial character and feelings can be happy there. His business is not to make out his title-deed by his virtues, but by his virtues to make out his meetness for that inheritance of glory. You will find a difference, as wide as the east is from the west, between the condition of him who toils for heaven as a recompence, and of him who, already regarding heaven as his own, prepares himself, with all the alacrity which faith and hope can inspire, for its pure delights, for its holy services.

In the note at the beginning of the chapter on the subject of the extent of those benefits which have been achieved by the death of Christ, if Paley does not enter into the region of conjecture, he at least plants a footstep on the very margin of it. I can scarcely say he goes too far, though he certainly could not with safety or prudence have gone farther. There is one passage, and but one, which I at present recollect in Scripture, which seems however to warrant the length to which he has actually proceeded—I mean that where it is said that Christ reconciled all things to God, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven,\* intimating that there is a something, we know not what, connected with the enterprise of redemption, which has a bearing on other orders of being, and a relation with distant parts of the universe—a grandeur in it commensurate with the greatness of Him by whom it was accomplished, and in virtue of which, instead of being limited in its effects to the destiny of but one planet and one species, it seems as if involved with larger and higher interests, thus having a scope wide as infinity, even as it has a consequence that will last for ever.

But the most practically interesting part of this rather adventurous speculation, is that which relates to the people of our own world, in regard to whom Dr. Paley seems to intimate that the benefit of Christ's death may extend to those who never heard of it. And so it may, for aught we know. With this qualification, I would not quarrel with the conjecture, and would only

\* Col. i. 20.



interpose a caution, lest we should regard the people who lie without the limits of Christendom to be so benefited already by the mysterious and untold influence which the redemption by Christ has had upon them, as at all to slacken or supersede the ardour of missionary benevolence. Certain it is, that whatever unknown advantage the death of the Saviour may have obtained for those to whom the tidings of it never have been borne, there is unspeakable enlargement—there is all the magnitude of a greatly overpassing good, represented in Scripture as resulting from the knowledge of the Saviour. We lie indeed under an express and imperative obligation to spread these tidings all over the world—"Go and preach the gospel to every creature;" and let us not, therefore, find any apology for that inertness which is so prevalent among Christians in regard to missionary exertion, in any imagined good which we may conceive is already wrought for them by some unrevealed channel of conveyance. Throughout the whole of the New Testament, the main benefit of Christ's death is represented to descend upon men through the intermedium of faith; and "how can they believe except they hear? how can they hear without a preacher?"

As to the text which Dr. Paley quotes, that Christ died for the whole world, let it well be understood that His death is not represented as having achieved an actual pardon for the whole world, but as having achieved an amnesty which might be proposed to the whole world. But to receive the benefit of the amnesty, we must hear of it; we must understand the footing on which it is held out, and comply with the terms of it. I for one do not object to the expression of eternal life being yours in offer, but in order that it may be yours in possession, there must be an acceptance on your part, and that it is your faith in the reality of the offer which constitutes this acceptance. Christ died for the whole world, because now and in consequence of His death the offer of the remission of sins may be made to the whole world; and when the expression is thus understood, so far from superseding, it enhances to the utmost the obligation which lies upon us to bear this precious overture of reconciliation among all the families of earth. They whom that overture never reached lie in consequence, we have every reason to believe, under a heavy destitution, which tells on their state through eternity; and they, again, whom it has reached, and who have nevertheless rejected it, so far from experiencing the benefit and virtue of the atonement by the Saviour, will entail upon them-

selves the burden of a sorer condemnation. That atoning death is the savour of life unto life to those only who accept of its offered benefits ; to those who refuse, it will be the savour of death unto death.

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## PART II.—CHAP. III.

### THE CANDOUR OF THE WRITERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

#### THE PRAYER.

WE feel, O God, how entirely we are at Thy disposal, and how, in all the events of providence, Thou indeed hast the mastery over us. Give us to feel as we ought the whole extent of our dependence, and that to Thee we owe the continuance of every present blessing, the fulfilment of every future hope. Do Thou accomplish Thine own promise of causing all things to work together for good to them who love Thee ; and that we may love the God who made us, may we put faith in the gospel of Thy Son. May all terror be displaced from our hearts ; may confidence and affection take the occupancy there ; and may we be completely furnished for the walk and the ways of holiness, through faith working by love, and love yielding all manner of obedience.

The New Testament may be regarded altogether as a striking and wonderful phenomenon when viewed in connexion with the age and the circumstances under which it was produced. The various characteristics which belong to it, whether as a moral or literary composition, go to prove that it at least borders on the miraculous, if they do not fully establish its claims to this designation. Or, should it fail in reaching the distinct and definite character of a miracle, so as to constitute a finished proof, it at least approximates so nearly to this as to constitute a likelihood or a promise of veracity. There may not be enough in the argument to overbear the conviction, but there is enough in it to invest it with a rightful and a challengeable power over the attention. It is a mistake to imagine that the collateral, or the auxiliary, or the subordinate evidences of our faith, might all have been dispensed with. They subserve a high purpose, even though they should fall short of fully satisfying the mind that Christianity is true. They, in fact, secure in many cases, and ought to

secure in all cases, a hearing for Christianity. They first invite and then prolong the regards of the inquirer towards it, and they often prolong his regards until he come within sight of those credentials which at length compel a full and final verdict in its favour. And it is of prime importance to observe, that many of those symptoms of veracity which Paley in this chapter has expounded to us, present themselves to the very early notice of observers. They give a *prima facie* aspect of credibility to the New Testament. They announce themselves on the instant even of a first perusal; for one cannot mistake the artlessness, and the sincerity, and the high moral tone wherewith the volume from beginning to end is so obviously pervaded. And it must now be familiar to you, that to feel the force of these arguments it is not necessary that they should ever have been stated, or that you should ever have recognised them as arguments at all. They work an impression in favour of the Bible, without the impression being ever once reflected upon—they carry the judgment; and though they have the actual grounds on which that judgment rests, yet thousands there are, as you already know, capable of forming the judgment, yet wholly incapable either of stating the grounds, or even perhaps of understanding the statement of them when made by another. It is not necessary, first, that a Paley should remark on the naturalness of this one passage or that other, ere a peasant should feel the naturalness. The truth is, that this pervading naturalness has been felt by thousands and thousands more of homely understandings, and wrought its appropriate effects in conciliating and helping on to decided convictions, ere any learned expounder arose and remarked it as a peculiar and characteristic excellence of the New Testament. There is thus the evidence working its direct influence on minds that never cast a reflex eye towards it. I have no doubt that the naturalness is felt by many a cottage reader, and has its effect, a warrantable effect, though he may never have looked reflexly upon it, and begetting a general confidence in the truth of the whole. The honesty of the writers he can also recognise. He can read in their testimony the natural tones or marks of integrity, and be impressed by them. To the many nameless indications of their truth, he yields the sympathy of his trust; and we doubt not, that in various ways there is a certain evidence or faith-working power in the Bible far beyond what they who take up the subject philosophically have ever yet been, or perhaps ever will be able to analyze.



There is an exceeding naturalness in the conduct of Gallio,—referred to among other instances by Paley,—who cared for none of these things, and on the moment he understood that the question related to some sectarian points of controversy among themselves, drove both the parties from the judgment-seat. There is the utmost dramatic justness of representation in the contemptuous impatience wherewith he put away from him the matter that did not belong to his legitimate province, and which he felt to be either nauseous or insignificant. And it is far from being a solitary exhibition, for we think he exhibited the very spirit which might be detected in almost all that has come down to us of the sayings or sentiments of the heathen respecting Christianity. It was a matter of obscure sectarianism that lay beyond their cognizance, and they spoke of it accordingly, ignorantly but scornfully condemning it with as great decision as if they knew it all, and yet plainly discovering that they knew nothing about it. We see this plainly in Tacitus, and Pliny, and Suetonius, and Lucian; and it so accords in fact with what we might conceive or might have witnessed in the present day, that we cannot fail to be impressed by it with the identity of human nature in all ages. We can easily figure how a high official personage, occupied with his own engrossing topics, would feel or express himself in regard to any ignoble sect, with a perfect ignorance of all its peculiarities, and yet a perfect sense and impression of the littleness of them all. I remember being much struck with this about some sixteen years ago, when the question of Missions to India was discussed in Parliament, and a great deal of evidence was taken on both sides of the controversy. The preponderance of the testimony was altogether on the side of the missionary cause, and it was found accordingly that its success was not incompatible with the safety of the British interests in that distant region of the globe. Among other witnesses, Warren Hastings was examined, and nothing could exceed the utter incompetence of his evidence, discovering as it did a glaring misapprehension of all the facts of the case, and evincing him to be an utter stranger to transactions which took place in his own vicinity, and throughout the country where he both resided and reigned. Yet nothing could be more natural than his total misinformation on the matter; and it was really not to be marvelled at, that in the multiplicity of his official cares, a matter so fractional as the incipient efforts of a few missionaries among the mighty population who were under him, should have

altogether escaped his observation. The confidence that marked his hostility to the enterprise is not so easily justified ; but it is the very confidence coupled with the very ignorance discovered by many who bring home from India the most hostile misrepresentation of the missionary cause, and claim the authority of having been residents on the spot. A little reflection might suffice to demonstrate how insufficient the plea of residence is. It is truly a possible thing to live in the busy engrossment of one's own affairs, and to be scarcely aware of the existence of many important transactions and things which are going on almost at our very door. There is great room for the fellow-subjects of the empire, nay, even for the fellow-citizens of a populous town, losing sight of each other. In such a city as the one we live in, for example, how many hundreds are there in the highest and most fashionable circles who know little or nothing of the state of its religious sects or religious societies ! How little would a mere contiguous residence in this case avail as a plea for being listened to ! What superior weight would the written statement of one having a part in these transactions have over the careless and conversational depositions of men who, though living on the spot, were at almost an infinite moral distance from the matter in question ! And thus it is, that the reports of progress and success by such men as Carey and others, the accredited missionaries from Britain to India, far outweigh the random assertions, whether of civil or military gentlemen, from that part of the world.

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## PART II.—CHAP. IX.

### THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

#### THE PRAYER.

WE desire, O God, to keep an habitual hold upon Thyself in the midst of this world's distractions. Amid the multiplicity of our doings, may we forget not that Thou art the Being with whom we have mainly and emphatically to do, and may we know what it is to keep Thee in remembrance all the day long, and to have our hearts steadfast with God. O do Thou recall us from the deep and obstinate ungodliness of nature. Do Thou awaken us to a new moral and spiritual existence. Do Thou work in us the faith of the Gospel, that through Him who died to regenerate as well

as to redeem, we may be quickened in the new life, and animated by the new hope.

Paley ascribes the less rapid progress of Christianity in our own times to the evidences being not so strong. I think he is in error here. It was not the miracles which formed the main instrument of conversion even in the age of their performance. One thing, in the first instance, is clear, that many were the cases in which the reality of those supernatural performances was fully admitted by those who stood their ground against them. No one would say of Nicodemus that he was converted at the time of his conversation with our Saviour, and yet he both acknowledged the miracles of our Saviour, and acknowledged them as proofs, too, that God was with Him. Our Saviour did not, it is obvious, sustain this acknowledgment, sincere and honest as it seems to have been, as enough to mark Nicodemus as a Christian; and He followed up this remark of His visitor by a description of that which constitutes the very essence of conversion: "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Except he be born of the Spirit, he cannot see that kingdom.

Let me here present you with as accurate a definition of a miracle as I can frame. A miracle is an ostensible violation of some law of nature, above the reach of human power to effect, or human intelligence to foresee, and preceded by the command or the announcement of one who appeals to it as the manifestation of a Being whose power and intelligence are superhuman. I call it an ostensible and not a real violation, upon this principle—that, if a real violation, it would offer to our notice a different consequent coming in train of the same antecedent; whereas the antecedent is not really the same, it is but apparently or ostensibly the same. The intervention, in fact, of a superhuman power, is that which makes it substantially a different antecedent from before. You would not say there was any violation of the law of gravity when a falling body is arrested in its descent by a hand that intercepts it, and is there sustained at a distance from the ground. But were there no hand stretched forth, and the body sustained by an invisible agency, and without, therefore, any visible support, this is as little a real violation of the law of gravity as the former. The invisible agency does now what the visible hand did then, and it is just as much a different antecedent in the one case as in the other. It is this I think which requires the term "ostensible" to characterize the



violation. And it is not without consideration that I subjoin the latter half of the definition,—preceded by the command or the announcement of a Being who appeals to it as the manifestation of such power. Here observe what is excluded by the former half. Suppose another Roger Bacon to arise among us, and discover some new force in nature, which, under peculiar circumstances, brought together by himself, lands in a result the opposite of all that we ever before observed in the apparent circumstances, and to announce beforehand this result as an evidence of a superhuman power; why, such a case must be guarded against in our definition of a miracle, and it is done so by our alleging that the thing was above the reach of human power,—else the first sight of an inflated balloon might have been a miracle, and we bring it down from the rank of a miracle by bringing it to the test of our definition. This semblance of a miracle is but a semblance, because not above the reach of human power, and lying within the reach of the power of the experimentalist or discoverer who was concerned in it. But suppose that instead of announcing the ascent of a balloon, he were to announce, in the form of a command if you choose, the miracle of Mahomet, that the moon should split asunder, and it did so accordingly. This is a miracle, and yet might not be so, were it not for the announcement or command that came before it; because, for aught we know, there might have been not even any known law ostensibly violated in this matter. There might be a chemistry going on within the recesses of that planet, which, in virtue of certain known principles, would explode at the time, even as the similar planets, recently discovered, bear many evidences of their being the fragments of a larger planet rent asunder by explosion. You would not call that explosion a miracle; neither would I call this, but for the clause of the definition. The thing is beyond the reach of human power; but this is not enough for making it a miracle, yet if announced immediately before, then whether done by an immediate forthputting of power on the part of a living being or not, even though but done in virtue of a natural process just on the eve of its consummation, then although not a miracle because beyond the reach of human power, it is a miracle because beyond the reach of human intelligence to foresee; and he who wrought it must either be superhuman himself, or if announced by a man, that man must have had converse with one who is superhuman.

We think that there is a power in the evidence of miracles

which would carry our minds. We have had no experimental verification of this power upon ourselves. And we are really not sure whether, apart from the explanation that Paley gives of the matter, apart from the solution of magic or of demonry by which the Jews made their escape from the conclusion that this man of undoubted miracles must have come from God, we are not sure whether we might not have persisted in our incredulity ourselves, even under the very exhibition which they had. At all events, there is a strong testimony here to the internal evidence of Scripture, or to the affirmation by the Saviour to the greatness of the self-evidencing power of the Bible, when he states, that resistance to the one species of evidence is the token of an equal resistance to the other species of evidence. "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though a man should rise from the dead."

You will recollect the principles on which I insisted at great length in the early period of our course. They are principles, I think, which help to explain many of the peculiarities which belong to the actual state of the Christian evidence. I have asked you repeatedly to distinguish between the probability which amounts to a call upon the attention, and the proof which amounts to the justification of a verdict on the question attended to. It may perhaps surprise many, but as you know I think with Paley, that the evidence of miracles was not overpowering in these days. I would even carry the position a little further; I think that the great use of these miracles was to accomplish the former and not the latter of the two functions. They constituted a rightful call on the attention of those who witnessed them; and as the fruit of that attention, there was in reserve a higher and a more effective evidence, even the internal.

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### PART III.—CHAP. VI.

WANT OF UNIVERSALITY IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRISTIANITY, AND OF  
CLEARNESS IN ITS EVIDENCE.

#### THE PRAYER.

IN Thee, O God, we live, and move, and have our being Give us to feel the intimacy of this relation. Give us to feel the subordination of the thing that is formed to Him who formed it, that we may no longer walk in

the independence of our own counsels, but that in all our ways we may acknowledge Thee, and submit ourselves in everything to the will of God. May Thy law have a pure and a practical ascendancy over us ; and though Christ hath borne its penalties, may we never forget that to us remains the obligation of its precepts. May we walk as those who are justified by faith, yet judged by works, and bear a perpetual reference in our hearts to that day when we shall have to give an account to God of the deeds done in the body.

Paley says, that a full display of heaven would interfere with the activities of social life. I think he requires to be qualified here. The weaker the evidence for eternity, the more conspicuous is the prudence displayed in living for it, and the greater faith it demands for that purpose. That is the right way of looking at the subject ; and not to say that you could possibly overdo the work of preparation for eternity, which is the impression that Paley seems to convey.

It would require a very lengthened argument indeed to bestow full elucidation on the topic here adverted to by Paley. I can scarcely do more than state, in express opposition to him, that you cannot overrate either the force or the frequency of religious considerations, that the constant bent of nature is all the other way, and you may give yourself quite indefinitely to the object of glorifying God to the utmost, of providing for eternity to the utmost. Such principles as are alleged by him are alleged to the effect of vindicating indifference, of bringing down the standard of Christianity, of adjusting an impracticable compromise between the spirit of the children of light and the spirit of the children of this world. The perverse direction taken by the monks and the mystics of former days gives no legitimate warrant for this miserable dilution of the real essence of practical Christianity ; and the precepts, high and superhuman as they may be reckoned, remain to this day of standing obligation to do all things to the glory of God, to do all things whatever in the name of Jesus. We know that a misapplication of these had the effect to banish many zealots of former ages out of the world ; but this does not subvert or do away the true application, which is to animate all we do in the world with the sublime principle of godliness, and for the sublime object of perfecting and heightening our preparation for heaven. It is wholly a mistake that in a mind of ordinary soundness the force of the religious principle, even to the utmost, either unfits or withdraws from the



necessary attention we should give to the business of the day, and the accommodations of the day. I feel quite assured that Paley's view in this matter does not accord with experience. To illustrate it by a familiar case :—Suppose a person setting out on a far journey to a place where, on his arrival, he knew that a magnificent fortune awaited him. His heart would be there. His thoughts would be ever carrying him forward in contemplation there ; yet all this engrossment and big expectation of what he was tending to, would not strip him of the necessary attention and self-command for giving the requisite directions on the road, for ordering the right accommodation at night, for arranging a constant conveyance from one place to another, or even for remarking on the loveliness of the successive scenes, and noting either the comfort that gladdens or the beauty that smiles on the passing traveller.

Paley says, that the system of nature is a system of beneficence, but not of optimism ; that is to say, that there are few cases in which we could not imagine something more perfect than that which we see. He instances rain, the supply of which is partial and irregular—much of it falling on the sea, where it is of no use, and much suffering being sometimes occasioned by its deficiency or delay ; whereas, we could imagine showers to fall just when and where they would do good, and so distributed over the globe as not to leave a field scorched with drought, or a plant withering for want of moisture. But we do not doubt that the arrangements of the atmosphere are regulated by God ; and we are not to expect in revelation an optimism which we do not find in nature.

## PART III.—CHAP. VII.

### THE SUPPOSED EFFECTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

#### THE PRAYER.

WE rejoice in the declaration that he who willeth to do the will of God shall know of Christ's doctrine whether it be of God. We rejoice that the truth is thus made accessible to him who aspires with moral earnestness after it. Visit us, O Lord, with Thy grace in our hearts, that we may obtain light in our understandings, and verify in our own experience the

saying, that he who seeketh findeth. Give us to feel the obligation of doing Thy will, and may it be our supreme desire to acquit ourselves of this obligation. And may we realize in the history of our own mind the connexion which Thyself hast intimated between purity of desire and purity of doctrine. Guide us in all our inquiries, and be ever with us.

Here also it is necessary to guard against the danger of a certain laxity of sentiment on the subject of the distinction between public and private morality, as if the obligations of the one were not equally binding with those of the other. The maxim that all is fair in politics is grounded on this laxity. What a man would blush to do in his individual capacity, he, associated with others, will, without scruple or shame, do in a corporate capacity. One kingdom will practise violence and depredation against another, though each, perhaps, of the separate members in the government that originated the war would recoil from a similar injustice against any of his fellow-men. There is not the fine-edged morality or honour between nations that there is between individuals, and the violation of the former awakens little or none of that generous indignance which the latter never fails to excite in the hearts of beholders. Now, what is true of morality holds still more eminently true of religion, and of those virtues which are peculiarly religious. It will be long ere a nation, when smitten on the one cheek, will lift up the other. It will be long ere it be regarded as a point of duty among states, in honour to prefer each other. Seeing that wanton injustice is so current a thing in the corporate transactions of such large communities with each other, it will be very long ere generosity be the rule or the principle of international proceedings. We are only describing a fact, or stating how the matter is; but though we have no time to discuss the principle, we think it right to aver that this is not as the matter ought to be, and that generally it were well if the corporate and the individual morality were at one, and more especially that the legislature were all made up of Christian men, and Christianity presided over all their deeds and all their deliberations.

In the conclusion of this chapter, Paley speaks somewhat lightly about differences of opinion. Here, again, we must qualify his assertions. A wrong opinion may be an evidence of that worst of all moral evil—indifference or heedlessness to the will of God; and its outgoings may lead to the worst consequences, both on the present moral condition and on the future

everlasting state of those who have entertained it. It is a very delusive imagination that all creeds are equally acceptable, if there be equal sincerity on the part of those who profess them. There is nothing which a man is more blind to than his own insincerity, and nothing more subtle than the deception which the soul practises upon itself. And then to represent the matter as if it were insignificant what the dogma be, if we have only come honestly by it—why, according as one dogma or another has laid hold of the man's actual belief is he in a wholly different attitude of thought and feeling and moral relation to the God who formed him. I cannot imagine a greater specific diversity in this respect than that which obtains between a man who holds his own righteousness in whole or in part, to form his meritorious claim to the rewards of eternity, and the man who, renouncing all dependence thereupon, cleaves to the righteousness of Christ as his alone plea to the friendship of God. These two dogmas originate in antecedent moral states the most unlike possible to each other, and each is the germ of a distinct, or rather diametrically opposite character. The moral and the intellectual in man's constitution are far too closely interwoven to justify any such rash assertion as we are now considering; and without being able to expatiate more, the assertion runs counter to the general spirit of the Bible, where salvation and belief stand so intimately related to each other—where many are said to perish for lack of knowledge—where we are exhorted to hold fast the form of sound words, and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; and lastly, as a special instance of the stress laid upon the doctrine, where Paul says he was determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

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### PART III.—CHAP. VIII.

#### CONCLUSION.

#### THE PRAYER.

THOU, O God, art the high and the holy One who inhabitest the recesses of eternity, and the throne on which Thou sittest is a throne of righteousness, and the law which hath issued from Thy mouth is an unalterable law, and whereof Thou hast said that heaven and earth shall pass away



before one jot or one tittle of it shall fail. Give us, O Lord, more thoroughly to comprehend that gospel whose admirable expedient it is to reconcile the honour of Thine august government with the salvation of those who have trampled on its authority. Give us to rejoice in that economy under which we sit, where both mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have entered into fellowship. May we seek after an interest therein, and count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

The resurrection of the dead is stated in this chapter to be the principal doctrine of revelation. Such a representation might suit a perfectly legal economy, and is, I think, fitted to throw into the shade the great characteristic peculiarities of the dispensation under which we sit. It is perhaps not a very determinable question which doctrine is most important, nor would it be very easy to form a scale of precedency along which they might be arranged in the order of their dignity and worth. But I do feel jealous of any representation which removes as it were to the background what I hold the great and distinguishing article of Christianity—the remission of sin through the blood of a satisfying atonement; or, what is just an extension or enhancement of the same doctrine, the offer of a righteousness achieved for us by another, and to the rewards of which we are made as welcome as if the righteousness had been achieved by ourselves. This, Luther has denominated the article of a standing or falling Church; and we cannot forbear this passing homage to it, though not at all in a condition now for making full disclosure of its preciousness.

Paley says, "Let the constant recurrence to an observation of contrivance, design, and wisdom, in the work of nature, once fix upon our mind the belief of a God, and after that all is easy." The qualification I would lay here is upon Paley's affirmation that all is easy. The truth is, that the belief of God, such as He is, meeting with the conscience of man rightly awake to his own moral state such as it is, lands him in a difficulty insurmountable by human wisdom, and which it is the great object of the gospel of Jesus Christ to do away. I can easily understand how from the postulate of a God there may, by a clear and consecutive train of inference, be established a legal economy under which we behold men as accountable subjects, and immortality as the great theatre of retribution for the deeds done in this scene of earthly probation. But such an economy is death to the hopes of the

species, and the object of a better and a distinct economy is to annul the difficulty and the despair which attach to such a state of things. This brings us again to the doctrine of the atonement, as in fact the great turning-point upon which the transition of the world from its ruin to its recovery is suspended, thus justifying all the representations given in Scripture of the exceeding worth and prominence of this tenet, and leading us to comprehend the declaration of Paul, when he said that he was determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

I have now done with Paley. I had hoped, but it was a hope founded on a miscalculation, to have been done with him earlier, and to have got room, ere the season was terminated, for the description of another text-book—I mean Horne's Abridgment of his Introduction to the Study of the Sacred Scriptures. It will be a noble compensation for this defect if I can prevail on you, in the course of the summer, to read his larger work. I do not think it possible by any management to have done more in the way of text-book examination than we have actually done. I could not, without injustice to many of the topics, have spent a shorter time either on Butler or Paley; and indeed in reference to the last, I must plead the necessity of being satisfied with the very curt and unsatisfactory way in which I have been obliged to traverse the latter parts of his inestimable performance. By the commencement of next season, if we are spared, I shall have fixed on a more advanced text-book; and now that we have done all which possibly could be done in the time for the elucidation of the question who the letter comes from, the still higher question remains to be resolved, what the letter says.

THE CHRISTIAN'S DEFENCE AGAINST INFIDELITY.





## THE CHRISTIAN'S DEFENCE AGAINST INFIDELITY.\*

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THERE are several ways in which a man, who practises the art of divination, might try to make good his pretensions to this supernatural endowment. He might do so by attempting to pronounce on the kind and the quantity of money which I have about my person. He might pass a confident utterance on a matter that is hidden from every human eye but my own, even on the number and the character of those pieces of coin which I am carrying about with me—and this description of his may be rigidly true, in all its varied particulars—and at different times may he make distinct and repeated trials of the same kind, and succeed in every one of them. And surely it is conceivable, that these examples of an unfailing coincidence, between what he says, and what I myself know of the subject, may be so striking, and so multiplied, and so obviously free of all the symptoms and all the preparations of jugglery, as to leave upon my mind, not merely a firm, but also a most just and rational conviction, that the man is what he pretends to be; that there is a reach of discernment about him beyond all that is known of the powers or the principles of nature; that in fact, he has established himself to be a miraculous personage, and by evidence, too, of such a kind as, with a man of sober and enlightened judgment, might be altogether irresistible.

\* The following was written by Dr. Chalmers, as an "Introductory Essay" to "The Christian's Defence against Infidelity," a volume published by Collins of Glasgow, consisting of the following Treatises:—1. Leslie's "Short and Easy Method with the Deists;" 2. Lyttleton's "Observations on St. Paul;" 3. Doddridge's "Evidences of Christianity;" 4. Bates "On the Divinity of the Christian Religion;" 5. Owen "On the Self-Evidencing Light of Scripture;" and 6. Baxter "On the Danger of Making Light of Christ."—*Ed.*

Now, it is to be remarked of such evidence that, in the main strength of it, and in the proper and original impression of it, it is addressed exclusively to myself. I may make known to others the whole history of this wonderful transaction. I may report to them all the cases of successful divination which have been accomplished upon me. But still the evidence of these cases has to pass through the intervening medium of my testimony. Before that others can feel the same power of evidence with myself, they must be made to undergo the same treatment; or the same divination must be practised successively and individually upon each of them. They may choose to discredit my testimony. They may distrust my powers of memory and observation. They may suspect a collusion between me and an artful pretender. They may look upon me as a man either of dishonest purpose or of diseased imagination. They may muster up a thousand possibilities to ward away from them a conviction which I know and am assured to be a just one. And thus it is that I may, on the one hand, be surrounded by the incredulity of all my fellows, and I may be assailed in every direction by the imputations of falsehood or fanaticism; and yet, with the personal access I have had to an evidence to which none of my acquaintances have been admitted, and with a proper confidence in the soundness of my own recollections, and with the sense of a single-minded integrity throughout the whole of this business, I may, on the other hand, though accosted at every turn by the ridicule and the reproaches of my acquaintances, be fully warranted to place my immoveable confidence in him with whom I have held the intercourse of all these intimate and peculiar communications.

But let us now vary the supposition, and conceive that our extraordinary personage embarks his pretensions on another and a higher species of divination; that, instead of attempting to divine the money which is in my pocket, he attempts to divine the thoughts which are in my heart; that, laying claim to the wondrous prerogative of supernaturally knowing what is in man, he offers to scrutinize my mind, and to read to me the varied characters which, in the shape of opinion, and desire, and ruling passion, and prevailing infirmity of tempter, stand engraven in its chamber of imagery; that he unfolds to me the workings of my own soul, and lays before me a picture of the inner man, that can be vividly recognised by the eye of my own conscience; that he proves to me, how this little world of self, with all its affections and its tendencies, which stand so hidden from general



observation, by a thick and an impalpable veil, is altogether naked and open before him; that he makes me perceive, by his insight into the thoughts and intents of my heart, how he is indeed a most skilful and a most enlightened discerner; that, by his piercing inspection into the secrecies of my bosom, he can so divide asunder my soul and spirit, as to make every one of them manifest in his sight. Why is it not conceivable that, in this way too, there may be multiplied upon me the instances of a penetration far above the powers of humanity; that every new case of such a divination may serve to strengthen my confidence in him who performs it; and that, at length, I may be so overpowered by the evidence which he thus brings to bear upon me, as to give my full consent to all his pretensions, and to embark my every prospect, and my every determination, on his authority as a messenger from God?

And yet, when I do so, I do it upon the strength of evidence directed individually to myself. I cannot make another man the partaker of this evidence. I cannot possibly put him upon that station of advantage which I occupy. I cannot translate into his bosom my own direct and immediate consciousness of the movements which are going on in my bosom; nor can I furnish him with a window of observation, through which he may note the coincidence between those divinations which have been attempted on my mind, and my mind, which is the subject of these divinations. I am the only man living who can be made directly to perceive this coincidence, and to me exclusively and appropriately belongs the main strength of the evidence that is founded upon it. There lies an impassable barrier between me and my next door neighbour, in virtue of which I find it impossible to make a full or an adequate communication of this evidence to him. There may be divinations conceived, where the subject of them is equally accessible to all men. But the peculiarity of the divination that I am now insisting on is, that the subject of it is accessible only to the individual on whom it is practised. Ere my neighbour can possess the evidence which it affords, he must be made the subject of a distinct divination. Before this takes place, he has nothing to rest upon but my testimony, which he may reject as false, or which he may deride as fanciful, or which he may utterly despise as symptomatic of folly and of superstitious weakness. Still, however, in the face of all this, I may obstinately adhere to my own conviction, and be right in doing so. My contemptuous neighbour has no access

to the materials upon which my judgment is founded. He cannot bring himself into a state of contiguity with my mind, nor obtain such a view of its workings, as to see how good the evidence is that I have for my conviction; nor, until he has forced his way within the penetralia of the inner chamber, will I, with a right sense of my integrity, and a right confidence in my judgment, hold him entitled to pronounce it a bad evidence. I alone have access to the depositions of my own consciousness. And I have faith in their veracity. And I can judge of the accordancy between them, and the divinations of the man who calls himself a prophet. And I may see it to be an accordancy so close, and so minutely variegated, and so often exemplified, and so sustained throughout all the successions of my experience and my history, that, believing it to be miraculous, I may say, and say with justness, that surely God is in him of a truth. And thus may I exhibit, not merely an inflexible, but a sound and philosophically consistent faith, even in circumstances where, abandoned by the sympathy of all my fellows, I am traduced as a hypocrite, or reviled as an enthusiast.

There is something to confirm all this in Scripture history. Our Saviour, in the course of His conversation with the woman of Samaria, achieved upon her a work of divination. He read to her a passage out of her present and her bygone history; and she was so far impressed with the circumstance, as to say, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." She repeated the circumstance to her countrymen; and it is recorded that some of them bore such respect to her testimony, that they believed on Jesus, "for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did." But though some, not all; for it is further said, that "many more believed because of his own word." True, it is not said that this word carried the same kind of evidence to them, that it did to the woman of Samaria. It is not said that, disbelieving her testimony, they were at length made to believe, by means of a similar divination practised upon themselves. But we may, at least, gather from the passage, that the evidence on which their faith rested did not lie in any external miracle. This is not what they alleged as the ground of their faith. But they "said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

But any deficiency of information in this passage, is amply made up in other passages. The miracle of tongues, for in-

stance, held out to the notice of the world, by the first teachers of Christianity, should have compelled the attention of all whom they addressed, to the subject-matter of their testimony. A few moments of serious and candid examination would have convinced them of such a reality in this exhibition, as entitled the first preachers of the gospel to a further and a respectful hearing. But there were many in those days who wanted this seriousness and this candour; and they passed a rejection so summary upon the message that was proposed, that they would not even listen to the terms of it; and they put it away from them at the very threshold of its earliest intimations; and we are accordingly told by the apostle, that the gift of tongues, instead of exciting their inquiry, excited their ridicule, insomuch that they pronounced those who exercised it to be mad; and we also read of certain despisers, who, upon the very same exhibition, said, mocking, that "these men are full of new wine;" and and thus it is that they persisted in their unbelief, and wondered, and perished. Now, the way in which we understand the gift of tongues to have been a sign unto them, is, that it sealed their condemnation. It convicted them of a dishonest partiality on the side of falsehood. It made the gospel the savour of death unto death unto them. The sign of tongues was a sign which they spake against; and this wilful, perverse, unfair, and, at all hazards, determined opposition, drew upon them the fulfilment of such sayings, as, that unless those works had been done among them which had never been done before, they had not had sin; and that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for those who witnessed such miracles, but who so loved the darkness rather than the light, as to resist the impression of them.

Thus much for those who believed not. And as to those who believed, it does not appear to us that it was the miracle of tongues, or indeed any external miracle whatever, which wrought in them the saving faith of the New Testament. A previous miracle might, in many cases, have been the instrument by which their attention was gained: but we think that the evidence upon which their conversion hinged, beamed upon their minds from the subject-matter of the testimony. It was in the act of listening to what is called the prophecy, or (taking this term according to its undoubted sense in many passages of Scripture) it was in the act of listening to the exposition of Christian doctrine, that they felt the impression of that evidence



which we have already insisted on—even the evidence of such a divination as was beyond all that could be accomplished by the sagacity of man. The truth of what the apostles told them was made manifest to their consciences. What their Christian teachers said they were, they felt themselves to be; and they recognised the coincidence, and they were arrested by it. They gave them credit for a supernatural commission, when they discerned such a reach of penetration into the secrecy of their bosoms, as they judged to be supernatural. And the evidence they thus obtained was not diluted by its transmission upon a vehicle of testimony, from the experience of one man to the hearing of another man. All who believed shared in the same experience. Each of them was made the subject of a separate divination. Each carried home the word spoken, and found it to tally with all that he perceived of his own character. The evidence came with the whole force of its powerful and primitive impression upon every conscience. And we think that nothing more needs to be said, in order to understand the kind of influence by which, when the first teachers prophesied, or expounded their message and their doctrine, “and there came in one that believed not, or one unlearned, he was convinced of all, he was judged of all; and thus were the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he worshipped God, and reported that God was in them of a truth.”

But these gifted teachers of our faith not only spoke to the men of their own age, they also wrote for the men of other ages. They have left behind them an enduring memorial of their doctrine and their testimony. They have graven it on an imperishable record; and we know not a more deeply interesting question within the whole compass of theology, than, Whether, while the word of the apostles is thus transmitted by writing, the evidence which lay in that word at its first and its oral delivery, is transmitted along with it to succeeding generations? May we, in the reading of that word, gather the same evidence for its truth, which the unbelievers, and the unlearned in the apostolic age, did in the hearing of it? In one short sentence, Has this evidence descended? Has it been actually translated into the pages of the Bible? Does this book stand to us in the place of its human composers, who have long ere now been consigned to the silence of the grave? Can it do by itself now, what they personally, and of themselves, did then? Can it evince such a power of divination into the secrecies of the heart,

as to bear upon its own forehead the attestation of God being in it of a truth? An unlettered man of the present day knows nothing of its external evidence. He is an utter stranger to the erudition and the history of the eighteen hundred years which have elapsed since the first promulgation of Christianity in the world. It is all a dark and an unknown interval to him. Nor can he fetch a single argument, for the establishment of his faith, from across an abyss which looks so obscure and so fathomless. Now the question is—May he fetch any such argument from the book itself? When, in the act of reading it, the word is brought nigh unto him, is there anything within it by which it can announce its own authority, and hold out, to a simple and untaught reader, the light of its own evidence? Does the word written inherit all the powers of the word spoken? Does there emanate from the doctrine, as recorded by the apostles, that virtue to arrest, and to carry the conviction, which actually did emanate from the same doctrine, as told by the apostles? In-somuch, that the Bible shall be not merely the messenger of its own contents, but shall also be the messenger of its own credentials; that wherever it goes, it shall bear abroad with it the legible and the satisfying inscription of its own truth; that by the light which beams from its pages, it shall make known the celestial character which it wears, and the celestial origin from which it sprung; that it shall emit, upon every side of it, the lesson of its rightful authority; and that, though it borrow not one particle of aid from the skill and the scholarship of its controversial defenders, it shall be able to speak for itself, to find its way even among the humblest of our cottages, to reclaim, and to convince, and to enlighten their darkest population, and to put the stamp of a sound and a clear intelligence on all the discipleship which it earns among them.

We do not see how we could have abridged our observations at any former point of this argument; and, after all, have we only arrived on the margin of a vast and untrodden field, and feel ourselves placed on the mere threshold of a subject far too big and too unwieldy for the present Essay. We will not attempt the impossibility of entertaining the question we have just now started, in such a way as to meet the every doubt, and to pursue the every illustration, and at length to bestow upon our argument its complete and conclusive establishment. We firmly believe that there is no one position in Theology which can be more strongly and more philosophically sustained than

the self-evidencing power of the Bible. For a full and satisfactory exposition of this subject, we must refer our readers to Dr. Owen's Treatise, in the present volume, "On the Self-Evidencing Light and Power of the Scriptures," and all we shall do at present is just to bring forward as much, in the way of remark as we have room for, on the important point which has been suggested.

When this evidence first dawns on the mind of an inquirer, there is one striking point of accordancy which generally offers itself to his contemplation—even that accordancy which subsists between the inward experience of his own heart, and the outward description of it that is laid before him in the Bible; and is, in fact, like the exact correspondence which obtains between the cipher and the thing to be deciphered. There is no one announcement which the Bible maintains more steadily, and which it keeps by more perseveringly, and which, in opposition to all the wisdom of this world and to all the delusion and vanity of the people who live in it, it is ever holding forth more fearlessly and more unrelentingly than the utter alienation and worthlessness of man in reference to God. It makes the entire corruption of our species the basis of its system. It never either questions or qualifies this position; but takes it up, and proceeds upon it; and we recognise it at every turn as the great and the pervading element of Christianity. And when a man, unwarped from all the influences by which he has hitherto been blinded, looks inwardly upon himself, and perceives that it is really so—when enabled to pierce his way through all those plausibilities of character which have hitherto lulled him into a deceitful security, he is made to see how utterly devoid he is of what may be called the main or the elemental principle of righteousness, even a principle of allegiance to God—when it becomes evident to him that at the very moment that the virtues of instinct or of natural endowment throw a lustre of moral accomplishment around him, and draw upon his person the eye and the homage of society, he is neither thinking of the God who made him, nor making His will the standard of obedience; but, with the full bent of his affections to the creature rather than to the Creator, he is, in fact, making the world that divinity to which he renders the incense of a perpetual offering; and withholding his heart from Him who claims the ascendancy over all its desires, and giving it up in unreserved devotedness to the idols of sense and of time. Why, when he thinks of this



as the very turning-point of the controversy between God and His creatures ; that to do this is to trample on the authority of the first and the greatest commandment ; that, let him be kind or amiable, or generous or upright, there is that universal attribute of the carnal mind, even enmity against God, which spreads itself over the whole system of his feelings, and deeply infuses the very best of them with the guilt and the malignity of sin—when he contrasts his forgetfulness of God, and his utter indifference to God, with the weight of those unnumbered obligations that he owes to Him who called him into being, and who enriched him with all his faculties, and who gives him every breath, and whose right hand upholds him continually—when thus enabled to descry, through the mists of a pride that is now mortified, and the false brilliancies of an imagination that is now arrested, how, with a heart withheld from God, he, in fact, has been carrying about with him from the first infancy of his recollection, the very seed and principle of rebellion against his Maker—when he comes to see all this, and furthermore to see how the same lesson, which his now enlightened experience is reading to him, in characters so distinct and so vigorous in his own person, stands engraven as vigorously and as distinctly on the record of Scripture ; how the very thing has all along been most firmly, and in the face of this world's resistance, stated in his Bible, which is now opening upon his conviction, from the clearer view that he now takes of the lineaments of his own heart. Is it, after all this, to be looked at as a mystery, that he should proffer his respect to a volume which tells him what no other volume ever told him, but which he now sees, by his own discernment, to be true ; that he should feel constrained towards that book in which he has found such an exact image of himself, as is not to be found within the whole range of human literature ; or when an utterance of the Bible thus meets with its counterpart in his own bosom, and it be an utterance which nature never could have prompted, because revolting to all the pride and to all the sagacity of nature, shall he be any longer suspended in doubt or in amazement, though so convinced and so judged, and with the secrets of his heart so made manifest, his belief should at length be overpowered by this and similar instances of such a wondrous divination ?

There is no room for dilating on other instances, or for describing the whole compass of Scripture, with the view of pointing out the every passage from which there glances, on the

reader whose eyes have been opened, this evidence of divination. We cannot show how the very offer of such a Saviour as can alone quell the apprehensions of sinful nature, and makes the conscience feel at peace with God, is virtually in itself an act of divination—or how the distaste of nature for the truths of the gospel, a distaste asserted in the records of the gospel itself, forms another striking example of divination—or how the way in which this distaste is made to give place to a spiritual relish, and a spiritual discernment of these things, tallies with other verses of the Bible, and goes to swell and to multiply the evidences of divination—or how the actual revolution, felt by every believer whose heart is now open to the charm and the significance of that which he at one time recoiled from in nauseous antipathy, forms an argument here of a weightier character than that of divination. We cannot venture at present on so wide a field: the evidence is, in fact, too abundant for it. The number of verses is too great which exhibit a harmony between the doctrines of the Bible and the findings of experience. But it may at least be remarked, that it is an evidence out of which something may be gathered to meet the case of every inquirer. For first, if he be in a state previous to conversion, this evidence accumulates upon him by every statement he finds about the deadness and the darkness and the dread of his alienated bosom in reference to God—and he feels it to agree with the testimony of his own conscience—and he sees in the Bible the reflection of his own most intimate experience, as it tells him that he is living without hope and without God in the world, and that a moral impotency has got hold of him, and that he cannot render, in his own strength, a spiritual obedience, and that there lies upon him the utter impossibility of conceiving love to God, whom, without the faith of the New Testament, he ever will look upon as a distant and inaccessible Lawgiver. And secondly, if he be on the eve of conversion, he finds out other points of accordancy. He looks at the gospel, and sees there what he can see nowhere else—a something to tranquillize the fears of guilt, to meet its necessities, to bring the sinner, who by nature stands afar off, near unto God—and as he feels this wondrous virtue of the peace-speaking blood, he believes that an application so suitable to man, could only proceed from Him who knew what was *in* man. And, finally, if he be already converted, this evidence strengthens upon him every day; and pours a growing light upon his path; and when he looks at his Bible,

he sees that it contains within its pages an exact transcript of his own feelings and his own exercises ; and as he looks at his own heart he sees the intimations of the Bible realized upon all its movements ; and the points of accordancy between the outward die and the inward mould, he perceives to be far too minute and manifold and inscrutable to have been divined by the sagacity of man—and the conviction meets upon him with every new step in the progress of his history—and just as the Christians of old believed that God was in the apostles of a truth, so does a Christian of this day believe that God is in the Bible, which the apostles have left behind them—and to the truth of this belief, all the thoughts, and all the transactions of his inner man, lend their testimony—as he feels within himself the conflict of two opposing principles, and the habitual prevalence of one of them ; or as he feels within himself the faith which worketh by love, and the love which yieldeth obedience ; or as he feels within himself the process of sanctification ; or as he feels within himself the peace and the joy and the spirit of adoption, which sounds to the world an unintelligible mystery ; or as he finds on his own person the fulfilment of prayer, and the fruits of the Spirit, and a growing conformity to the example of Christ, and a growing meetness for the inheritance of a blissful eternity.

But we will not oppress ourselves with the magnitude of this argument, by attempting to dispose of it, in all its parts, and in all its illustrations, within the compass of an Essay ; and we shall close this part of our argument by the three following remarks :—

1. This argument, so far from precluding the testimony of the Spirit, is the very argument which the Spirit brings before us in the exercise of his legitimate functions. He tells us of nothing that is out of the field of revelation, or out of the field of human experience. The telescope does not add a single character to the distant landscape, but brings home to our discernment all the actual and antecedent characters which existed in it. In like manner, the Spirit of God adds nothing to the word of God. He makes use of the word as His instrument. He gives us a clear view of those characters which stand engraven upon the Bible, and of those lineaments which Nature hath drawn upon our own hearts ; and therefore gives us a clear view of that accordancy of divination out of which the whole of this argument emerges.

2. The evidence which is thus furnished, is, no doubt, an internal evidence ; but it is altogether dissimilar from that in-



ternal evidence, which some would most presumptuously and most unphilosophically rear, as an accordancy between what they see in the Bible, and what they imagine to be the plans and the processes of the Divinity. This evidence is nearer home, more within the compass of human experience, and in every way more consonant to the cautious and solid temper of the modern philosophy, and rests exclusively on the wondrous harmony that subsists between what is seen in the Bible, and what is felt within the familiar recesses of one's own heart, and the authoritative informations of one's own consciousness.

3. It is an evidence that might be felt, in all its strength, by an unlettered workman—and he may have well warranted convictions upon the subject—and yet, from the very nature of the evidence, he may be unable to pass an adequate communication of it into another's bosom—and he may be loaded with contempt for a set of impressions which to others are utterly inexplicable: and thus it is a very possible thing, that what is called madness, may be soberness and truth—and what is branded as Methodism, may be indeed the soundest and the most enlightened philosophy.

There is another very palpable argument for the reality of some such evidence as we have tried to illustrate, which it is impossible to overlook; and the question we have to put is, What is that evidence on which a man becomes a believer within the limits of Christendom, where the Bible is circulated? And we would appeal to the ministers of Christ, for they can speak experimentally upon this question—tell us, amongst all the transitions you have witnessed from darkness to the marvellous light of the gospel, what the effective consideration was which accomplished such a change! Tell us, ye men whose office it is to preside over this department of human nature, who have long been conversant with the phenomena which it offers, and have doubtless treasured up in your remembrance, some cases of conversion, where the after-life of the individual stood so nobly contrasted with his bygone history, as to attest, in characters the most decisive and undeniable, the reality of his faith! Tell us if you have ever detected the instrumental cause of that faith—or what that was which the convert was looking to, when this principle dawned into existence—or from what quarter of contemplation the light of truth beamed upon his understanding—or where, in the whole compass of that field upon which the thoughts of man can possibly expatiate, did he meet with the charm which cleared all his doubts and all his darknesses away

from him ; which established his feet on a way of rectitude that he had never before walked, and animated his bosom by that Spirit of power and of a sound mind, the workings of which he had never before experienced ! O where lieth the mystery of these persuasive influences which must have gathered around him, at that point of his earthly career, when the doctrine of Christ first took an ascendancy over his judgment, and the morality of Christ shed its rich and beauteous accomplishments over his practice and conversation ! Did it lie, we ask, in anything external to the subject-matter of the testimony ? or did it lie within the subject-matter of the testimony itself ? Did the light lie in that history which the documents of antiquity enable you to give of the Book ? or did it lie in that doctrine and information which stand engraven upon its pages ? Did it lie in the exhibition you made of the proof for the communication ? or did it lie in the exhibition you made of the substance of the communication ? Tell us the argument of that awakening sermon under which you remember some secure hold of infidelity to have been stormed. Was it in the act of combating the hostility of literature, when, in all the pride of erudition, you did demonstrate the faithful conveyance of the Scriptures of truth from the first age of Christianity ? Or was it in the act of combating the hostility of nature's blindness and nature's opposition, when you opened these Scriptures, and made the truth itself manifest to the consciences of men ? This last we imagine to be the only way of converting the souls of men. It is not done by descending into the depths of the earth, and there fighting the battles of the faith against the dark and the visioned spectres of geology. It is not done by ascending up into the heavens, and fetching down from these wondrous regions some sublime and specious illustration. It is done by bringing the word nigh unto them—by entering with it into the warm and the well-known chambers of their own consciousness—by making them feel the full force of its adjustments to all their wants and to all their experience—by telling them of that sin, under the conviction of which nature tries to forget God, or would fly affrighted from His presence—and of that Saviour who alone can hush the alarms of nature. These are the lessons which can do to this very hour what they did in the days of the apostles. They can make the unbeliever and the unlearned feel himself to be judged of all, and convinced of all—and thus can manifest the secrets of his heart, so as that he shall acknowledge God to be in them of a truth.

And here, by the way, we cannot but remark, what a powerful argument the subject we have been illustrating furnishes in behalf of Bible and Missionary Societies. Did we propose to make our next door neighbour a believer unto life, we should feel that the most direct instrumentality we could bring to bear upon him, would be to ply his conscience with the word of the testimony. And, did we go to the neighbour beyond him, we would just do the same thing. And though, in passing from one man to another, we widen the distance from our own home, we would never think of making any change on the kind or on the method of application, by which we tried to subdue them all unto the faith of the gospel. And in this way would we proceed till we got to the verge of Christendom—and if such be the right and the effective treatment for the last man we found within its limits, tell us, for in truth we cannot perceive it, why, on leaving him, it should not be a treatment equally right and equally effective for the very first man we meet with beyond it. How can the evidence lose its power in the transition which we make at this particular moment? What ingredient of strength has fallen away from it? What is it that the man on this side of the line has, which the man on the other side of the line has not? Neither of them is made to witness a miracle. Neither of them has heard a single word about the original vouchers for Christianity, or about the faithful transmission of its credentials along the line of many generations. Neither of them has been initiated into the scholarship of its argumentative evidence; and if you will just demand no more for the Christianization of the latter, than what you count to be enough for the Christianization of the former, it were easy to prove, that the man who is standing without has just as much to help on his discipleship as the man who is standing within. Both of them have the same mental constitution. Both are in the same state of darkness and alienation from God. Both labour under the same fears, and may have the same feeling of their moral and spiritual necessities. In a word, each of them possesses a bosom alike framed to meet, by its responding movements, the message and the information of the New Testament. The thoughts of the one heart are as effectually reached by the word of God, which discerns and divides them asunder, as the thoughts of the other heart. And if, on the strength of these principles, we may go, by a single inch, beyond the outskirts of Christendom, on the very same principles is the whole extent of the habitable world laid open



to the enterprises of Bible Societies and Christian Missionaries. There is not a human being who does not carry within him a mould of correspondence to that die which was wrought by the wisdom of God ; and which is fitted to meet the case and the circumstances of all His children ; and which, in fact, makes the evidence of the Bible as portable, as Bibles and teachers are portable, and which may, and therefore ought, to be carried round the globe ; and should be made to traverse in every direction the wide domains of humanity, and be carried to every island and every district where men are to be found, and to circulate in full throughout all the tribes of this world's population, and to leave not so much as one straggling remnant of the species unvisited, nor to stop short in this noble enterprise, till the word of the testimony has been proclaimed among all nations, and kindreds, and families.

And if it were not so—if there was no such evidence as that for which we are contending, by what practical avenue could the faith of the gospel be made to find an entrance and an establishment among the great mass of our *own* population ? Take away from us the self-evidencing power of the Bible, and you lay an interdict on the Christianity of cottages, on the Christianity of workshops, on the Christianity of crowded and industrious establishments, on the Christianity of nearly all our cities and all our parishes. That the hope which is in us may have the property of endurance, there must be a reason for the hope ; and where, we ask, in the whole field of their habitual contemplations are the toil-worn children of poverty to find it ? Are they to search for this reason among the archives of history ? Are they to gather it out of the mouldering erudition of other days ? Are they to fetch it up from the profound and the puzzling obscurities of argumentation ? Are they to encounter the toils of scholarship, and ere the light of revelation can guide or can gladden them, think you that they must learn to number, and to balance, and to confront the testimonies of former generations ? No ! Refuse us the evidence we have been insisting on, and in doing so, you pass an obliterating sponge over nearly all the Christianity that is in our land. It might still continue to be talked of in the cloistered retirements of literary debate and speculation. But the mighty host of our people could take no more rational interest in its questions than they could in any controversy of the schools. And if the truth of this volume be not legibly stamped upon its own pages—if all

the evidence by which we have affirmed it to be most thoroughly and most visibly impregnated be a delusion—if all the varied points of accordancy between the book of revelation and the book of human experience be not sufficient to attest the Divinity which framed it—or if this attestation be beyond the understanding of an ordinary peasant—then must Christianity be ever shut up from the vast majority of our species ; nor do we see one possible way of causing it to circulate at large among the families of our land.

But let us not be understood by these remarks to undervalue the power and the importance of the external evidences of our faith. Though it is to the subject-matter of the testimony itself that we would send the inquirer for the most satisfying conviction of the truth, yet we hold it of paramount importance to exhibit the strength of argument, and the irresistible force of evidence which can be adduced for the authenticity and Divine authority of Revelation, to silence the gainsayer and to vindicate Christianity from the assaults of infidelity. And we know not a finer assemblage of evidence for the Divine Record, to meet and to overthrow the sophistries and objections with which scepticism is ever assailing it, or to resolve the doubts and difficulties which may agitate the mind of the honest inquirer, than the able and interesting Treatises of which the present volume is composed. The writers display, in an uncommon degree, extensive knowledge and profound erudition ; and they possess every talent and qualification which is essential to solid argument, legitimate reasoning, and sound induction. With a manly spirit, suited to the rectitude of their cause, and possessed of an *experimental* assurance of the truth which they advocate, their arguments are more characterized by heartfelt power than subtle ingenuity ; and, with a feeling of confidence in the strength of their cause, they manifest that dignity which best comports with the sacredness and majesty of truth, by rearing the fabric of their own evidence, without descending to notice all the oft-refuted, yet still re-echoed sophistries and cavils of infidelity. The evidences they present, however, are so extensive and varied that every order of mind is addressed with suitable proofs for its conviction ; and though it would be impossible to advert to every trivial objection which infidelity has invented or every cavil which impiety has urged, yet without fear or evasion, they have fairly selected and triumphantly met those difficulties and objections which infidelity has represented as

most formidable to Christianity. Aware that there are infatuated men who reason against Christianity, as if it were pregnant with every mischief—who seem to delight in the imagination that such an overwhelming calamity as a belief in its doctrines shall never overtake them—and who resist its pretensions with such inflexible obstinacy, as if the abrogation of Christianity would introduce a new order of blessing into our world—the writers in the present volume not only introduce Christianity as presenting her credentials, but as stating and expounding her *beneficent* message. While deducing the legitimate internal evidences, arising from the nature, character, and design of Christianity, and its peculiar adaptation to renovate the moral condition of man, they intermingle their evidences with a luminous exhibition of the dispensation of grace—a dispensation so holy, perfect, and beneficent in its character and operation, that while it is well fitted to bless the life that now is, it furnishes the only solid and comfortable hope for eternity.

In Leslie's "Short and Easy Method with the Deists," and "The Truth of Christianity Demonstrated," we have the historical evidence for the truth of Scripture exhibited in a form so convincing and satisfactory, that the mind which can reject such evidence must evince a total perversity of reason, as well as an abjuration of all such testimony as can substantiate the truth of any by-gone event in this world's history—which would go to expose every authentic record to the charge of fabulousness, and reduce the best established facts into a state of doubt and uncertainty. The firm coherence of his argument, and the soundness of his marks for distinguishing between truth and falsehood, which he so legitimately applies for ascertaining the authenticity of the facts of Scripture history, render his statements so conclusive and irresistible, that no reply can be made to his demonstrations, which does not imply dereliction of reason and principle which the bitterest enemy of Christianity would be ashamed to avow. His proofs possess that specialty of character that, ever by the confession of infidelity itself, they can belong only to genuine records, and can never be found but in connexion with events which, in truth and reality, had a positive existence. It must therefore be a daring and hardy scepticism indeed, which can elude or resist the force of those unequivocal proofs, by which the author indubitably establishes the authenticity of the facts which are recorded in Scripture.

Not less conclusive, in another department of evidence, do we



hold Lord Lyttleton's "Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul." The soundness of his reasonings, established on the well-known principles of human nature, and the no less sound and philosophical deductions which he makes from the whole sentiments and conduct of the apostle, render his arguments in favour of Christianity so clear and irresistible, that we think no honest mind can give his "Observations" an attentive and unprejudiced perusal, without arriving at a thorough and well-established conviction of the truth of Christianity. To reject such evidence, or to arrive at any other conclusion, would be to betray a most wilful perversity of mind, and to commit a most grievous outrage on the soundest principles and laws of human judgment. From the impossibility of accounting for such conduct by the ingenuity of imposture, it must be by a total inversion of all the motives and principles which are known to influence human conduct, that an opposite conclusion can be drawn to what our author has deduced from an examination of the life and labours of St. Paul—that he was indeed a divinely-commissioned agent of heaven, and that the Christian dispensation, which he laboured to establish, has indubitable claims to a Divine original.

In Dr. Doddridge's Discourses on the "Evidences of Christianity," we have a full and comprehensive survey of all the variety of evidence which is generally adduced in support of the authenticity and Divine authority of the New Testament. The treatise is no less characterized by the clear and forcible argument which pervades it, than by the affectionate earnestness which it breathes, and the close and pathetic appeals which the excellent author makes to the minds of his readers, on the pre-eminent importance of the truths of the Divine record, and of the no less unspeakable danger of neglecting or contemning the gospel message.

The next treatise, by Dr. Bates, on "The Divinity of the Christian Religion," contains a no less comprehensive, and still more powerful exhibition of the various evidences which can be adduced for establishing the truth of Christianity. The evidences from history, from prophecy, from miracles, from the testimony of credible witnesses, are all brought in distinct and convincing review before the mind; and our readers cannot peruse this admirable treatise, without an increased feeling of confidence in the variety, and fulness, and invincible character of that rich assemblage of evidence, on the immoveable basis of

which Christianity is established. And while he satisfactorily establishes the truth of Christianity, he does not leave his readers in ignorance of what Christianity is. He not only presents the testimony which accompanies truth, to carry conviction to the understanding, but he presents the truth itself, in such a form as is fitted to commend it to the conscience. And such is our feeling of confidence in the truth, for attesting its own Divinity, that we hold the truth itself to possess a power of manifestation, which addresses the heart with a more prevailing and resistless energy, than either the power of demonstration can press, or the evidence of the most incontestable miracles can enforce.

Dr. Owen's Treatise "On the Divine Original Authority, and Self-evidencing Light and Power of the Holy Scriptures," embraces a distinct but most important species of evidence; and this article will be held in high estimation by those who desiderate a satisfactory conviction of the claims of the Bible to divine inspiration, of which he adduces the most solid and indubitable proofs; and he affords a no less clear and satisfactory explanation to those who possess no distinct apprehension of the manner in which the word came forth from God, and was again given out by those inspired men to whom it was communicated, as well as the security and infallible certainty that what they gave out as the mind and will of God was indeed of divine original, and a divine communication. On this firm and immoveable basis he establishes the authority of the Scriptures, their claim to a supremacy over the mind and will of those to whom this revelation has come, and the fearful danger of a neglect or a rejection of the message. And the truths which are made to evolve, in the progress of his demonstration, bear a hard and humbling aspect to that proud philosophy which cherishes a feeling of sentimental adoration of the works of nature, which are but the subordinate reflectors of the glory of the Deity, while it turns with antipathy and disgust from that word which the Deity has magnified above all his works, as giving a fuller and more glorious manifestation of his mind and character—a manifestation of the Deity so surpassing and exalted above that which is exhibited in the visible creation, that, in comparison with the light, and power, and extent of that manifestation which is given out in the Bible, it may well be said to have no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth. And while we award our meed of praise to the writers of the previous treatises in this volume, who have reared such a collective body of evidence to meet and over-



throw the no less impotent than impious assaults of infidelity, yet do we hold Dr. Owen to have rendered a more essential service to the cause of Divine Revelation, when, by his clear and irresistible demonstrations, he has proved that the written word itself possesses a self-evidencing light and power for manifesting its own divine original, superior to the testimony of eye-witnesses, or the evidence of miracles, or those supernatural gifts with which the first teachers of Christianity were endowed for accrediting their divine mission. And well may the profane or the infidel contemners of revealed truth tremble at their presumption, when they are told not only of the superiority of the word of God in its power of manifestation above all His works, but of the light and power which the written word possesses to attest its own divinity, above all that external evidence which infidel philosophers so much desiderate for establishing the truth of Divine Revelation.

The Treatise of Richard Baxter "On the Folly and Danger of making light of Christ" closes the volume; and though it does not partake of the character of direct evidence, yet we hold it to be of prime importance to the cause of Christian truth, as it detects and exposes the latent causes of infidelity in the worldliness, or love of pleasure, or the diversified pursuits which engross the mind, to the utter exclusion of the salvation which the gospel reveals. And truly does he resolve the largest portion of the infidelity which exists, into the infidelity of the heart, and not of the understanding. From the irreconcilable characters of God and Mammon, of Christ and Belial, of the love of the Father, and the love of the world, those infatuated men who are determined to render their homage to the one, must necessarily entertain feelings of hostility to the other; and this hostility of the affections exerts a secret but blinding and delusive influence over the judgment, and in spite of the clearest and most incontrovertible evidence, betraying it into a disbelief of what the depraved heart must wish were not true. Aware as we are, of the extreme reluctance with which men whose minds have become poisoned with the pride of infidelity, or whose hearts have become depraved with the love of sin, admit any argument in favour of Christianity, we could not close our volume without bringing the forcible and pathetic appeals of Richard Baxter to bear upon their consciences. And if there be one piece in this volume which, in preference to another, we would more urgently recommend to their serious regard, it would be this invaluable



treatise of Richard Baxter. Aware as he was of that deep and desperate infatuation by which so many are deceived to their eternal undoing, with the tenderness and pathos of a man whose heart glowed with angelic benevolence—and with the earnestness and urgency of a man who felt the importance of his message; does he endeavour to persuade men by all that is commanding in the authority of God—by all that is winning in the love of Christ—by all that is inviting in a blessed immortality—and by all that is tremendous in eternal perdition, to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold of the offered remedy. And if such men continue in their wilful and obstinate rejection of the gospel, and heedlessly neglect, or perversely resist, the mercy which it offers, then it is not from want of clear and incontrovertible evidence, but from a desperately wicked and deceitful heart which is deceiving them to their ruin; and we know not by what power, or by what sophistry such infatuated men can turn away from them the force of this fearful declaration, That “if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: *in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not*, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

It is well that Christianity has such a firm basis of argumentation to rest upon. It is well that she can be triumphantly borne throughout the whole range of human literature, and can bear to be confronted with all that the fancy or the philosophy of man have ever devised against her reputation. We count every one illustration of her external evidence to be an accession to her cause, nor can we look at the defensive barrier which has been thrown around her without wishing that the public eye might often be directed to the strength and the glory of her venerable outworks. But let it not be disguised. The surrender of the understanding to the external argument is one thing; the rational principle of Christianity is another. And, therefore, there must be something more than the bare evidence of Christianity, to work the faith which is unto salvation. Many are the accomplished philosophers who have rejected this evidence, and to them it will stand in place of the miracle of tongues to the unbelievers of old. It will be a sign to justify their condemnation. But many also have admitted the evidence, and still the opinion has been as unfruitful of all that is religious, as the conclusion they have come to on any literary question. And, men of genius and accomplishment as they are, they must, to obtain

the faith of the gospel, just put themselves on a level with the most untaught of our peasantry. They must submit to be tutored by the same evidence at last. They must labour after the same manifestation of the truth unto their consciences. They must open their Bibles, and give earnest heed unto the word of this prophecy. To the spirit of earnestness they must add the spirit of prayer. They must knock for light at the door which they cannot open, till the day dawns and the day-star arise in their hearts—and then will they find, that, by a way hidden from the wise and the prudent, but revealed unto babes, the word of prophecy may become more sure than any miracle can make it—more sure, than if a voice of attestation were to sound forth upon them from the canopy of heaven—and greatly more sure than by all that traditionary evidence which links the present with the past, the period in which we now live with that wondrous period, when such a voice was heard by human ears on the mount of transfiguration.

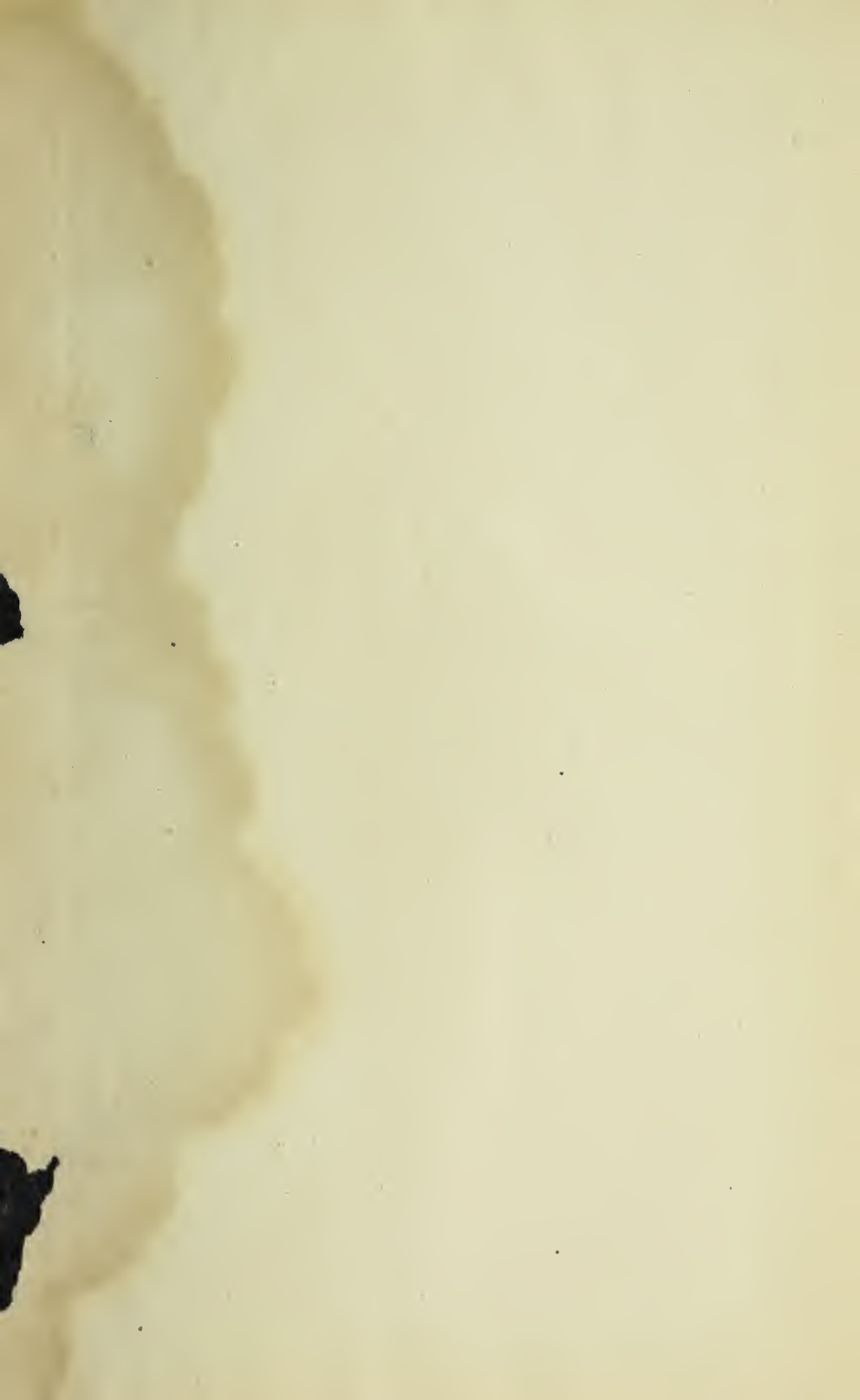
It is true that the word of the testimony is often perused in vain—that in the reading of the Scriptures, the veil which is upon the heart of the natural man often remains untaken away—and that, after all that is done with him, he persists in blind and wilful obstinacy, and will neither see the doctrine of the Bible, nor the reflexion of that doctrine upon his own character. To work this effect, the word must be accompanied by the demonstration of the Spirit, and who shall limit His operations? When we think of the influences of Him who is promised in answer to prayer, and when we farther think of the extent of warrant that we have for prayer, even that we should ask for all such things as are agreeable to the will of God, who willet all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and who is ever ready to put a blessing on His own word; then, to the diligent reading of the word, let him add the humble, earnest, and sincere prayer, that “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, may shine into his heart, to give him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.”

END OF VOL. VI.















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